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## VALUES IN CRISIS

WHAT IS VALUE?

*J. C. Manalel*

IDEALISM IN INDIAN LIFE

*P. C. Kuttikrishnan*

VALUES IN CRISIS -

A SOCIO-PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS OF THE INDIAN SITUATION

*Sebastian Kappen*

THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL SITUATION IN INDIA

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POLITICAL PARTIES

*Alexander Paikada*

PHILOSOPHY AND LITERATURE

*K. M. Tharakan*

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

*Kurien Kunnumpuram*

BULLETIN: SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS VALUES AMONG  
CATHOLIC YOUTH IN KERALA

*Francois Houtart &*

*Genevieve Lemercinier*



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## CONTENTS

|  | <i>Page</i> |
|--|-------------|
| What is Value?<br><i>J. C. Manalel</i>   | 3           |
| Idealism in Indian Life<br><i>P. C. Kuttikrishnan</i>  | 5           |
| Values in Crisis -<br>A Socio-Philosophical Analysis of the Indian Situation<br><i>Sebastian Kappen</i>                            | 11          |
| The Economic and Social Situation in India<br><i>K. Mathew Kurian</i>  | 23          |
| Political Parties<br><i>Alexander Paikada</i>  | 45          |
| Philosophy and Literature<br><i>K. M. Tharakan</i>   | 56          |
| The Crisis of Values in the Catholic Church<br><i>Kurien Kunnumpuram</i>   | 66          |
| Bulletin: Social and Religious Values among<br>Catholic Youth in Kerala<br><i>Francois Houtart &amp;<br/>Genevieve Lemercinier</i> | 77          |

# The Problem of Man

**VALUES IN CRISIS**

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# What is Value?

(EDITORIAL)

The philosophy of values is comparatively of recent development. That does not mean that man was not value-conscious in the past. In fact, this is one of his distinguishing characteristics. Besides a rational explanation of things, he tries to ascertain their worth, weigh their advantages, admire their beauty, and enjoy their goodness. He can distinguish between what is small and what is great, what is silly and what is serious, what is ugly and what is beautiful, what is right and wrong and what is good and evil. The outside world with his increasing grasp of it, has its appeal to him, sometimes in spite of himself.

Value is then what appeals to us or attracts us, what arouses our admiration or recognition or esteem or love, what is necessary or useful or advantageous to us. What is bad or false or foul is often and better called anti-value.

From this it is clear that, strictly speaking, value is not the same as the good or the beautiful according to schoolmen, as it has always a reference to the intelligent subject that evaluates the goodness or beauty. But it has also to be emphasized that value is not merely our mental fabrication. It is founded in being.

Thanks to the modern philosophy of values, we have been able to separate the grain from the chaff and perceive more and more the sterling worth of certain values spiritual and moral. We are also able to discover new dimensions in the world of the spirit.

On the other hand, ignorance of values and lack of value-consciousness have led to a degradation of religious sense and religious observances and a lowering of the esteem of religion among men. There are people even today who "pay their tithe of mint and dill and cumin", but "neglect the weightier matters of the Law—justice, mercy, good faith" (Mt 23:23). Hence also follow blind obedience to authority and authority's blind insistence on it, literal observance of law and indiscriminate im-

itation of the past. *Mutatis mutandis*, the same happens in education, in literature, in communication media, in politics and in the socio-economic field.

The following articles initiate discussions on *Values in Crisis* in social, economic, political, educational, cultural and religious fields. They are not so much an assessment or sitting-in-judgment of what is happening, as analyses of the present situation in India or descriptions of the crises of values we are facing today.

In P.C. Kuttikrishnan's survey of 'Idealism in Indian Life' the whole field of the breakdown of ideals and the need for reinstating them is examined. Sebastian Kappen's attack on present values and his determined bid for a new order is a fascinating study of the problem. There is Mathew Kurian's investigation in, and learned discussion of, the social and economic situation in India and Alexander Paikada's discussion of political parties. There is also an interesting consideration of the crisis in values in philosophy and literature by K. M. Tharakan. It is followed by Kurien Kunnumpuram's enquiry into religious associations and institutions from the viewpoint of the crisis in our times.

The question arises as to what our young men have to say on this problem of values. Francois Houtart's answer is based on a scientific survey he made last year in Kerala. The writers in this issue have tried to assemble their views, and the result is a thought-provoking examination of the problem from different angles.

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J. C. Manalel

# Idealism in Indian Life

Recently, when I was talking with an old man at a village bus-stop, he asked me all of a sudden: Have you read what the *Puranas* have said about '*Kalikalam*'? When I looked a bit surprised, he recited a few quatrains. The meaning of the verses may be summed up as follows: There will be hotels all over the country. Those who profess to be noble will become indifferent to doing good deeds. Women will consider prostitution honourable. The student will disobey the teacher. The teacher will teach solely for the sake of money. The merchants will use false measures. Grain will be adulterated. The rulers will grow evil-minded. After describing all this the old man expressed his view that this heralds the arrival of *Kalki*.

But while he was describing the situation, I thought that *Kalki* would not incarnate itself, now that the time is past. If only these were the conditions for his arrival, *Kalki* should have come to India in the late fifties itself.

In our national struggle from 1921 to 1947, we had upheld certain ideals like liberty, equality and non-violence. A new and contemporary reinterpretation was given to them which was different from earlier ones. As for public men, their *dharma* (duty) was the service of the people. They were so dedicated that they offered selfless service to the country. They knew that an enslaved people, whatever qualities they possessed, could never achieve anything significant or great. Almost everybody in India was conscious of his responsibility to fight for freedom in this context. The man who inspired the people to join the fight was Gandhiji; the movement was the freedom struggle. There were numerous fighters who sacrificed their lives so that the people might be free and prosperous. Their words and deeds greatly influenced the social life of the country. In those days few thought of becoming rich or powerful by using unfair methods. The glory of life was to serve and not to be served.

After independence, the situation in India underwent a shocking change. One was able to acquire wealth and power, live



honourably, and think and express oneself freely. But there was also a steady deterioration of the idealism preserved for long by the upper and middle classes. Gandhiji lived only for a very short period after independence. Even before his death he had begun to be isolated. His followers were lured by power and were gradually drawn towards it. Before the cock crowed thrice, Peters denied him several times. During his last days Gandhiji was actually sipping the chalice of bitter disillusionment (It is very clear from records like Pyarelal's *Last Phase of Gandiji*).

It may be hard to follow in the footsteps of a master like the *Mahatma*. Those who were the followers of Gandhiji till then began to take the paths of profiteering. The quiet public looking on felt that idealism was on the decline. When Gandhiji was shot it was integrity of character as an ideal that sustained a shock. From that time onwards preaching and practice became divorced. With his death, empty verbiage began to flourish in the social and political life of the country

Another line of thinking developed along with this. Even though India did not experience directly the hardships and tensions of war, the mental climate created by it in the West came to have a powerful impact on our way of thinking. The greatest casualty that Europe suffered during the war was the damage to its psyche. The untold miseries of the Nazi concentration camps undermined man's faith in human goodness and culture, and people, especially youth, began to question all traditional values. Those who established the concentration camps and reduced man to a commercial commodity were not ignorant of traditional values. Young men did not hesitate to argue that the only eternal truth is the surrender of life to all-powerful death. This thought is reflected in the words of modern writers like Albert Camus. A sense of futility began to prevail in the world of letters. Those who agreed with the views of men like Camus could not question their sincerity.

The discounting of values has affected the new generation of India. She could not free herself from poverty even after twenty-five years of self-government. The people are not ready to accept the statements of their leaders nor are they ready to take arms against a sea of troubles. In order to resist the sense



of futility a high degree of idealism is essential. The ideals fostered by Gandhiji have already been shattered to pieces. Just as an unhealthy body fails to resist the attack of disease, the unhealthy minds of Indian youth fail to resist the infection of the sense of futility from the West, and to guide them, there has been no leadership coming forth.

But in the fifties the situation was slightly different. This was due to the revolutionary zeal of the labourers and the peasants. They were struggling under the conviction that freedom would not be complete or meaningful without the total political and economic liberation of the oppressed and exploited classes. As far as the labourers and peasants were concerned the struggle for freedom was not over and therefore they were actuated by a sense of dedication and sacrifice. Though the struggles were mostly for better wages they implied a greater ideal. These were the only means of achieving a greater end. Each labourer and peasant working to create a just future society had a new sense of values. The leaders who led them had a unique mental make-up. Most of them were volunteers under Gandhiji in the struggle for independence and had experienced various terrible persecutions. Even when they accepted the philosophy of Marxism, the idealism that Gandhiji had planted in them had not completely faded away. After the struggle for independence it was only in the labourers and peasants that the readiness for sacrifice was manifest. Even those who strongly disagree with the strategies of the struggles at Kayyoor, Vayalar, Punnapra and so on, will not question the self-abnegating spirit of those who took part in them. Where there is no idealism man will not offer to sacrifice his life. The natural instinct in man is self-protection. It is indeed the spirit of culture that strengthens man to overcome this animal instinct and sacrifice his life. During the early stages of Christianity Christians laid down their lives in the Roman arena and it was their blood that cemented their faith and culture.

But it is quite unfortunate that these struggles produced certain evils even while conferring benefits on society. The 'haves' who realized that it was dangerous to ignore the organized working class and peasants tried to dampen their revolutionary zeal through compromises. Better wages were given and better faci-

lities of life. The more the working class struggled the more concessions were given to them. Instead of being the means to a total revolution, their fight gradually degenerated into a baser means of achieving better wages and facilities. They were more intent upon increasing their profit than re-casting the social structure. Thus the profit motive became the prime urge. Nowadays working class struggles have degenerated into mere trade unionism. The brave new world of their dreams has withered though it hasn't totally collapsed.

One thing more – we have plans for national reconstruction. For a developing country, a plan is like breast – milk, and this is nature's plan for the perfect growth of the child. If the mother's breast is suppurated or cancerous, the child falls a victim to chronic illness or even dies. It is better to have no plan than to have wrong plans. Usually, if the government is bad, it affects only political situation in the country. But as planning affects all spheres of life, its evils will be felt at all levels. We need not discuss the merits and mistakes of our plans now. They have been criticised at the parliamentary level and it was agreed that those who executed these plans were impure and diseased. Their evil acts influenced not only our social and economic life but our culture. We have passed the planning periods but what we see today is not the development of agriculture or industry but commerce. Commercial mercenary motives, rather than an earnest desire for cultural or industrial productivity, have come to rule the minds of the people. Businessmen dominate all spheres of life. Money has become vitally important, and moneyed people have become the most respectable in society. Today we are influenced not by an agricultural or industrial culture but by a sort of commercial culture, if one may call it that. This kind of commercialism is vitiating our education, art, literature, journalism and politics.

Never before in India was education imparted with such a commercial motive as now. In the name of education knowledge is bought and sold. The deciding factor is money. It is no wonder educational institutions are considered commercial by the teacher who buys his post and the student who buys his admission.

Today the most popular art form is the cinema. More than an industry it has become a money-making machine. By exhibiting scenes that cater to the baser emotions it has become degraded into a means of acquiring money. Sex is exploited on the screen for immense profit. There is for example "Bobby", the biggest box-office hit of the decade. It is not remarkable for its artistic value but is saturated with adolescent sex. It is noteworthy that the story and the screenplay of this film is written by K.A. Abbas, known as a progressive writer. "Call Girl" is another new film similar to "Bobby". The story and screenplay of this film are by the same author. But "Aśani Sankēt" of Satyagit Ray - a beautiful piece of art made against the background of the Bengal famine - 'Kadu' of Girish Karnad, "Bhuvan-shom" of Mṛunal Sen and "Nirmalyam" of M. T. Vasudevan Nair are struggling to reinstate artistic values in the film world. In short, many an unscrupulous act is committed in the name of art which has led to a deplorable degeneration of culture. There is a persistent degradation of the classical arts for commercial interests. The production of pop music and a kind of pseudo-dance out of *Kathakali* is another example. They retain their identity, and are not completely debased. Today dance is nothing but erotic. The aim is nothing but catering to sex impulses.

At a particular stage of progress, literature and art may be yoked together. But each has to realize its identity and unique value. These have now developed independently in the world at large. Unfortunately, in India they are in each other's clasp and eventually have succumbed to commercialism. We are ready to evaluate the greatness of a book on the basis of its sales and thus measure the development of literature. This unmistakably establishes the influence of commercialism on literature. Moreover, writers are interested not in the fact that more people should properly read their books but that more and more people should buy them. The reason is that a moneyed man is more respectable in society than a man of letters.

In the political field, the influence of money has increased much more than in earlier times. The fault is not that of the individuals concerned. The nature of our political structure also counts here. We must still consider whether parliamentary democracy which has worked rather successfully in an island like



England with a limited population is workable in a sub-continent like India with a very large population. Our election expenses are huge: an enormous amount is spent by our political parties! It is practically impossible to raise such an amount from the people who are losing their interest in political affairs. So the parties have to depend on the wealthy for resources. And they help every political party according to its size. It means that they are investing money in a political commercial enterprise. Thus in politics a vicious circle is created. The source of inspiration in politics is not the welfare of the people, but the lust for power.

In short, the collapse, in the realm of values, has affected all spheres of our life. This is not a very pleasant fact. But it is no use fighting with the mirror which reflects one's image. This is so, not only in India but in other countries. For different reasons similar situations obtain everywhere in the world. But this is more a phenomenon in developing countries.

What were considered values till yesterday are discarded today. Can ideals be evolved on the basis of religious faith alone? The development of science precludes this view. But can scientific man depend exclusively on reason for the evolution of values that sustain him?

In affluent countries the retreat from materialism has already started, though the travellers themselves do not know where they are bound for.

Trivandrum

P. C. Kuttikrishnan

Translator - M. P. Mathai)

# Values in Crisis – A Socio-Philosophical Analysis of the Indian Situation

Our country is going through a crisis. Its symptoms are many and varied: the phenomenal rise in prices of even essential commodities, the increase in unemployment, the breakdown of law and order, the cynicism of the common man regarding political parties, his loss of faith in the government in power, the prevalence of corruption as a way of life and the widespread frustration among the masses. Though the existence of a crisis is beyond question, there is little concerted attempt made either by the government or by the intelligentsia to detect its deeper causes and suggest remedies.

No claim is made to attempt a competent scientific analysis of the present crisis. The aim is rather modest, namely, to provide a few tentative reflections on the valuational aspect of the crisis. In this the basis is primarily the observation of the social and ideological trends and forces around us. Naturally no one views the world from a position of absolute neutrality. One is always involved in one's world and approaches it from a particular standpoint which is itself conditioned by one's understanding of what man in society ought to be. Such involvement is quite legitimate on condition that one does not read into reality what is not there and is prepared to criticize one's presuppositions at every stage of investigation.

## 1. Value and values

At the outset it is necessary to define what we mean by value. By value we mean any socially desired goal. That values are socially *desired* implies that they are not to be considered in themselves but in relation to the well-being of man, and this relationship is dialectical in character. It is men who constitute values and meanings. In fact each person constitutes his own world of values. What is valuable to one person may not be so

to another. To a *yogi* wealth is a disvalue, not so to a business-man. So too the importance attached to the same value may vary with persons. A work of art may mean much to one, but little to another. If it is true that each person forms his own world of values, it is equally true that values in their turn make persons. A person cannot be defined in isolation without any reference to what he values. That is why the quality of a person can be judged by his system of values.

Though values are essentially related to individuals they have also a social character. If the values of one person have nothing in common with those of others he will not be able to enter into any meaningful relationship with them. Communication and social interaction is possible because all members of society, or at least significant sections of it, recognize certain things as values though all may not aspire to them in the same way or in the same degree. Values are therefore not only personal but also inter-personal realities. In other words they are *socially* desired goals.

Values are essentially related to men and to their well-being. Depending on the dimension of human life to which they correspond they may be grouped under various types. First of all, there are material values like food, clothing, housing and medicine, which have a special reference to man's bodily existence. Then there are social values like association, recognition and prestige; aesthetic values like music, painting, dance and drama; and ideational values like education and books. There are also religious values which either embody or mediate man's relation to the ultimate ground of all. Finally there are moral values like equality, justice and honesty. This last category comprises all attitudes, actions, and patterns of behaviour which contribute to the *total* well-being of man in society.

Values have different modes of existence. First, they exist at the level of articulate consciousness as in novels, poems, newspapers, films etc. Secondly, they have an existence at the level of *praxis* i. e. of man's dynamic, active-passive relationship to the world of things and persons. Thus we find them embodied in economic and social life. For instance, the mode of corporate production in factories is the concrete manifestation of a system



of values like hierarchy, co-ordination, efficiency, private interest and competition. No factory can function where these values have not been internalized by the participants. This is true of all social institutions. The functioning of the bureaucracy and the judiciary, the procedure of elections, the mode of decision-making, — all these represent so many ways in which values become crystallized. Thirdly, values exist also in the form of concrete products or artefacts. Take for instance any traditional Muslim house in Kerala. Its facing Mecca is the expression of a religious value. The absence or paucity of windows shows that the inmates, especially the women-folk, consider being seen by outsiders undesirable. The arrangement of rooms is indicative of the value attached to the segregation of sexes. Finally the material structure as a whole is meant to embody a special type of aesthetic valuation.

All this points to the fact that values are intimately interwoven with *praxis* especially with socio-economic *praxis*. *Praxis* not only embodies values but also mediates between them and the members of a community. It also forms the basis for the articulate formulations of theories. Articulated values in their turn consciously influence the socio-economic base. The relation between value-systems and *praxis* too is dialectical. It forms a constant unity in tension.

It follows, from what we have said, that any significant change at the level of *praxis* brings about a corresponding change in the value system of a people. Changes in the mode of production, distribution and consumption condition, more than anything else, the emergence of new values. In this process factors like contact with alien cultures and ideologies also play an important role. In the initial stages it is only a small minority that usually adopt the new values. This dissenting minority finds itself in conflict with the masses who hold on to the old values. Eventually the new trend gathers momentum and confronts the old from a position of strength. In this process of dialogue and confrontation each side becomes influenced by the other, reformulates its position and thus arrives at a synthesis. It can also happen that some old values completely succumb to the new ones and eventually become extinct.

## 2. Values in transition

In the light of these general reflections let us focus our attention on the concrete ways in which values change in our country.

Values are like plants. Uprooted from the soil, from the socio-economic infra-structure, they die. Thus many of the traditional values have become extinct. Time was when Nair women in Kerala considered it a privilege to bear children to lovers from the Brahmin community, for the Brahmin was considered a god on earth. This is no more the situation today. The same fate has befallen the collective mode of living represented by joint-families. There are many other values which are on the way to complete extinction like arranged marriage, caste status, the observance of ritual purity and blind submission to authority. On the basis of controlled observation of social behaviour over a fairly long period of time it is possible to distinguish those values that are destined to perish from others which are likely to persist though in a modified form. This brings us to another kind of value-change. That is, certain values become in course of time demoted and begin to occupy an inferior position in the scale of values. For instance, temples which were at one time highly valued have become less so, as is clear from their neglected appearance today in the countryside. This is true also of landed property, religious knowledge, cult, certain traditional forms of art, like drama, religious story-telling etc.

Transference is yet another mode of change affecting values, by which we mean the process which detaches a value is detached from its original bearer and attached to a new one. The personal loyalty which the poorer classes formally showed to feudal landlords is at the initial stages of industrialization and democratization, transferred to the factory manager, to the political leader, or to the government official. Closely resembling transference is the process of the transvaluation by which certain values, while preserving their traditional linguistic garb, take on a new meaning. Consider for example justice. Justice to slaves in ancient society meant nothing more than respecting their minimum rights which were themselves determined by their masters. In feudal society justice meant the fulfilment of the obligations deriving

from the relationship of personal loyalty on the part of the vassal and his lord. In the capitalist society the same term carries a different meaning, namely the observance of the respective rights of the employer and the employee. In none of these societies is the question ever raised whether the systems of slavery, serfdom and wage-labour respectively were just. This radical question is posed today by those who believe in socialism. In the eyes of Marx capitalist justice is the worst form of injustice, of alienation. True justice can be realised only with the abolition of wage-labour and of its pre-supposition, the accumulation of the means of production in the hands of a few. What we said of justice is true also of other values like equality, freedom, participation, love etc.

Finally we come to the secularization of values. In traditional society every aspect of life was determined by religious belief. Only what conformed to religious prescriptions was considered a value. This held good not only of moral but also of material, aesthetic, social and ideational values. In this sense religion was the mother of all values. Such a sacral society could exist only on the basis of a pre-scientific socio-economic *praxis*. In the pre-scientific world man found himself subject to the forces of nature as well as to social institutions. Not yet conscious of his power over his environment he naturally attributed to God what he could not dominate. But with the advance of science and technology he became aware of the fact that the world of things, persons and institutions around him had its own inner nature and was subject to its own immanent laws, which could be investigated and known through scientific reasoning. This led to an explosion of rationality. People began less and less to appeal to religious faith in order to discover the meaning of things. In consequence the various domains of knowledge gained autonomy from religious conceptions, and secular systems of values came into existence.

We have indicated some of the ways in which values undergo change. But not every change constitutes a crisis. Change becomes a crisis when it reaches a situation of conflict which can be resolved only through a radically new orientation. That such a crisis has affected the values of our society none can deny. However, it is difficult to identify its internal dynamics. For we



see in India the co-existence and inter-action of different systems of values operative in varying degrees in different parts of the country. First, there are feudal values which still influence socio-economic and political life. We have also the capitalist system of values, comprising private interest, competition, aggressive self-assertion, efficiency etc. Finally, there is a socialist system of values represented by the political parties of the 'Left'.

### 3. The capitalist spectrum of values

The fundamental value of capitalism is private interest which has its economic basis in private property. It implies a philosophy which reduces society to the position of the means to individual well-being, and thereby denies man's social dimension. Where private interest reigns supreme, 'the other' becomes either a means to one's economic ends, or a rival. Competition is thus installed as an important value. In competition only one can survive who asserts himself aggressively. As a result aggression, whether physical, moral or psychological, becomes even socially respectable, and the law of the survival of the fittest determines the whole of social life. Within this frame of reference freedom is understood as the possibility to pursue one's individual ends unhindered by others. In reality it is nothing more than the freedom of the few rich to exploit the many poor. Capitalism also regards equality as a value but understands it as the 'equal' opportunity given to physically unequal competitors in the same race. It is a type of equality in which some are 'more equal' than others.

The fundamental value of private interest consists in the relentless pursuit of profit, and of production for the sake of it. He who produces more, irrespective of what he produces and how, is projected as a model for others. One produces in order to make a profit and makes a profit in order to consume. Thus consumption installs itself as the be-all and end-all of life. The richer classes give the lead in the acquisition of more and more gadgets, of more and more refined comforts. And the masses follow suit. With this a new concept of happiness emerges. Your happiness consists in your having something which your neighbour does not have, and your unhappiness, in not having something which your neighbour has. Your value as a person is equated

with what you *have* and not with what you *are*. And you can *have* whatever you want if you have money, the equivalent of all commodities. Money therefore assumes the character of a universal value. It is the 'sanctifying grace' of capitalism.

A critical observation of Indian society will show that its essential determinants are private interest, competition, aggression, consumerism, money and other values and attitudes germane to capitalism. Initially these values held sway only amongst those who owned the means of production. In course of time they seeped into the lower strata of society. Though alien to Indian culture, they became progressively internalized in varying degrees by the masses. They made their impact felt first among the industrial working class and subsequently also among the rural population.

However, the internalization of the new values was not spontaneous but manipulated. Capitalists make a profit only if their products are sold. And the products will be sold only if they meet a corresponding need in the people. Where this need does not exist, it has to be artificially created. This is done with the help of advertisements, posters, exhibitions and the like. To this end capitalists make use of all the media of communication: radio, television, the press and films. They prostitute sex, womanhood, family, religion and even God to generate new needs among the unwitting masses. They weave myths around commodities and project them as symbols of status. The prospective customers are told, for instance, that foam cushions will give them 'the rest of their life', that 'odorono' will help them 'make love without having to share body odour', that 'to live on love and Linca' is one of the 'in' things of the day. Through these and other methods of psychic coercion, the capitalist system is manipulating and deforming not only the psychology of our people but also its somatic sub-structure. It thus produces not only goods for consumption but also consumer classes. The masses are thus degraded to the level of mere by-products of the economic system.

#### 4. Capitalism versus feudalism

How is it that the capitalist value system was able to make headway in spite of the fact that it did not come into being as

the result of the internal development of traditional society, but was imported from outside and imposed on our people? The answer seems to be that in its confrontation with capitalism the feudal system of values played an ambiguous role.

In the initial stages of its development capitalism found an ally in many of the traditional attitudes. The masses, psychologically attuned to the collectivism of joint-family and caste, both of which subordinated the individual to the group, had little difficulty in adapting themselves to the collectivism of firms and factories. It was easy for them to work for goals in the choice of which they had no say. Centuries of psychological conditioning by the hierarchy of caste facilitated transition to the hierarchy of functions and authority inherent in capitalist production. Accustomed to considering wealth and status as associated with birth, the working class saw nothing unjust in a few people concentrating in their hands the means of production, agricultural as well as industrial. The division of labour characteristic of a caste society found its counterpart in capitalism. Traditional conceptions regarding the superiority of the Brahmins as repositories of knowledge and bearers of economic privileges dovetailed with the capitalist assumption of the superiority of intellectual over manual labour. Thus through a process of transference feudal values contributed to the growth and expansion of capitalism. However, in serving the ends of capitalism the same values and attitudes themselves underwent a change. They could survive only by assuming new content and meaning. In other words, they went through a process not only of transference but partially of transvaluation.

But the struggle between feudal and capitalist value systems is one between unequal partners. With the breakdown of traditional structures like caste and joint-family, the former was deprived of its social basis. It therefore could survive only in the consciousness and habits of the people. The capitalist value system, on the other hand, was firmly rooted in an ever-expanding economic *praxis*. The economic *praxis* produced not only consumption goods but also the media of communication like radio, newspapers and films, which in their turn, helped the diffusion of the same values. In this context we should keep in mind that capitalism in the process of domesticating feudalism.



took on certain features. This is particularly true of its initial stages, and is clear from the way that caste, kinship, and communalism influenced the location of factories, the recruiting of workers and the promotion of employees. But soon capitalism reasserted itself in its original purity. Capitalists realized that the maximization of production was not possible on the basis of accommodation to feudal values and concerns. This victory of capitalism sowed the seeds of its own defeat or at least the frustration of its own avowed goals.

### 5. A diagnosis of the present crisis

The dissemination of capitalist values would not have led to the present crisis if the ever-increasing needs of the people could have been satisfied in some measure. This is not what is happening in India. The economic system generates needs in all, but can satisfy the needs only of a few. Even the poorest man in India is told of the advantage of foam mattresses, but those who can afford them constitute no more than five per cent of the population. In other words, capitalist propaganda artificially generates needs which capitalist *praxis* is unable to satisfy. The result is frustration among the masses. The mood of frustration is deeper among educated youth, who are more exposed to the world of advertisement. The present economic system breeds, in this manner, collective resentment and envy. It is in this light that we should view the widespread student unrest and agitations which have become so much a part of our social life

The student protest all over the country is not so much against the capitalist system as the conditions which make it impossible for them to satisfy the needs that the same system creates in them. What students aim at is not the eradication of exploitation but to terminate their exclusion from the circle of exploiters. No wonder the moment they get a secure job which guarantees them the benefits of the system, their protest dies out. The same holds true also of the organized working class, industrial as well as agricultural. They organize strikes and demonstrations primarily to secure more and more benefits in the form of higher salary and better working conditions, in other words, for advantages within the system. What motivates them is not common but private interest. It is not even the good of the workers as a class that is at issue. Workers join trade unions in

order to make use of them to secure their individual ends. In fact private interest determines the behaviour of the working class so much that they become divided into opposing groups, each trying to promote its interests and privileges even to the detriment of other groups. Thus the competition between worker groups.

What is striking is that even political parties professing socialist ideologies have become infected with capitalism. Most politicians and legislators representing the 'Left' engage in politics mainly for the sake of their economic interests. They use the masses as a means for capturing political power, and use political power to amass wealth. Thus we have the paradox of communists fighting capitalism in the name of capitalist values. Such struggles will in the long run only serve to reinforce the existing exploitative system.

It is clear, from what has been said, that the present crisis does not consist in the conflict between feudalism and capitalism or between capitalism and socialism. It is essentially a conflict between capitalist values and capitalist *praxis*. Its roots lie in the inability of capitalism to satisfy the needs it generates. In other words the conflict is internal. However, feudalism has played a role in accentuating the crisis in various ways. Feudal attitudes associated with fatalism, other-worldliness, detachment, non-involvement etc. dampen the popular urge to revolt, and breed conformism. The particular loyalties nurtured by family, kinship, community, and race divide the oppressed classes into opposing groups and thereby make it easier for the oppressors to pursue unhindered the policy exploitation. All this creates frustration among those sections of the masses who want to revolt. It is not surprising that in these conditions splinter groups emerge which resort to violence. Like feudal attitudes, socialist propaganda too has served to aggravate the crisis. The present atmosphere of frustration and unrest is due not a little to the political parties which draw inspiration from Marx. Their leaders preached the new heaven and the new earth of the classless society, while they themselves settled down comfortably in their own heaven of conspicuous consumption. By widening the gulf between expectation and fulfilment they too sowed the seeds of frustration.

## 6. Where are we tending to?

Regarding the outcome of the crisis one thing is certain. There will be no return to feudal, pre-capitalist society. The march of history is dialectical, and in it nothing repeats itself. There is no hope either that the crisis will automatically lead to a truly socialist society. A struggle against capitalism that is motivated by capitalist values cannot give birth to socialism. Besides capitalism has been able to tame not only feudalism but other forms of Indian socialism. Indian socialists have become so much infected with the ethos of capitalism that even the new society they project bears capitalist features. They think of a socialist society either in terms of state capitalism in which every citizen is reduced to the status of an employee, or in terms of distributionism in which every citizen is made an owner of private property, i. e., a capitalist. The present crisis has therefore little in its internal dynamics which assures transition to socialism. Does this mean that the crisis will continue indefinitely? I do not think so. The continuation of the crisis will only issue in total chaos, and this will go against the interests of capitalists themselves. They, therefore, may in the decades to come, accede to the minimum demands of workers by increasing their wages and improving their working conditions. They may also try to widen their circle of supporters among the ideological classes like teachers, lawyers and religious leaders, and the well-paid workers, by conferring on them still more economic privileges. To achieve this end they may also try to strengthen their hold on the bureaucracy and on politicians. There is also the possibility that the Government may turn Fascist and usher in an era of repression.

## 7. The Christian challenge

The capitalist system of values is essentially dehumanizing. It denies the dignity of man in so far as the masses are made tools to promote the welfare of the privileged few. It reduces the working class to the position of accessories in the machine, of mere by-products of a system. It denies also the sociality of man by subordinating the common good to private interest. It releases the hidden powers of aggression in man inasmuch as it makes competition the principle of social life. It is also essentially materialistic. For it sets up money as the supreme value, the

value of all values. For these reasons the believer in Jesus cannot but oppose it tooth and nail. For the same reason he cannot be wholly unhappy about the present crisis. For a capitalism completely stable and at peace with itself is a more dangerous foe to deal with than one that is in crisis. Seen from this angle the value crisis of today gives us more reason for hope than the situation a few decades ago. Yet the present social unrest, being motivated by the values of capitalism itself, cannot lead us to socialism. Capitalism may even regain its equilibrium by further taming its internal and external foes. Hence the challenge that faces all men of good will is one of giving today's crisis a qualitatively different orientation, of rendering it pregnant with possibilities for a truly socialist future. This means we have to work for a cultural revolution.

Such a revolution will demand the transformation of all the values of today. What is needed is nothing less than the creation of a new society which sets up the person in the community as the primary value, one in which the good of all will consist in the full flowering of each person, and the good of each person in the well-being of all. It will have to be a society in which co-operation will replace competition, love will replace aggression, quality will have primacy over quantity, the aesthetic will subsume the useful. In that society freedom will be realized, not inspite of, but through one's fellowmen, justice will determine not merely interactions within a given system but the system itself, commodities will take on the quality of gifts, the products of labour will have value only in the measure in which they are sacraments of human togetherness, and the materialism of consumption will give way to the humanism of communion. In that society each man will be open to another, and in that openness become also open to the Absolute, to the dimension of transcendence.

A cultural revolution of this type cannot be brought about without a radical restructuring of the entire social system. New values demand new structures. The scope of this paper does not allow discussion of the methodology of such a revolution. One thing needs to be stressed. For those who believe in Jesus of Nazareth and in the reign of justice and love he preached and died for, the time for a radical choice has come, for a choice



against the capitalist system of values and the economic *praxis* in which it is embodied, and in favour of a truly socialist future in harmony with the message of the Gospel. The organized church is not yet ready to make that choice, for its *praxis*, if not also its theory, is still governed by the values of capitalism. Individual believers, therefore, will have to carry out their choice in collaboration with genuinely revolutionary groups and movements in India. To refuse to make such an option is to follow the way of the priests and elders of old who stood by approvingly while the Son of Man was crucified.

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Calicut.

Sebastian Kappen

## The Economic and Social Situation in India

The Indian economy is passing through, possibly, the worst ever crisis in India's post-independence history. It is manifest through such serious contradictions as the following:-

- (1) increasing poverty for the vast majority of the Indian people along with the affluence of the few and concentration of economic wealth and power in the hands of a small number of monopoly houses and landlords;
- (2) mounting unemployment despite massive doses of outlays under the Plans;
- (3) inflationary rise in prices which transfer value from the working people to owners of large property holdings by reducing the purchasing power of the working people and ensuring great profits for big property owners, black marketers and black money operators;
- (4) the growth of "larger industrial houses" (monopoly houses) at a faster rate in the period of *Garibi Hatao*;

- (5) increasing dependence of foreign private capital and foreign collaboration agreements with imperialist countries along with claims of "self reliance";
- (6) "green revolution" in agriculture; but serious food shortages, famine and a widening gap in incomes between the rich and the poor in the rural areas;
- (7) expansion in education; but increase in the absolute number of Indian people who are illiterate; and so on.

The root cause of the present economic crisis and the contradictions listed above are the direct results of the capitalist path of development pursued by the Government of India under the political hegemony of big capitalists and landlord classes, increasingly collaborating with foreign finance capital.

The *Draft Fifth Five Year Plan* document claims that "removal of poverty and attainment of economic self-reliance are two strategic goals that the country has set for itself"<sup>1</sup>. A close examination of the document, however, will reveal that within the framework of policies pursued by the Government of India and the Planning Commission both these objectives have no chance of fulfilment.

### I. Removal of poverty.

The Planning Commission has adopted a definition of the "poverty" line which has little relevance to reality. According to them, "the level of Rs. 20/- at 1960-61 prices considered as the minimum desired consumption level would require about Rs. 37/- at 1971-72 prices....". They consider this level as that of the "minimum desired consumption level", which is contrary to what the Indian Labour Conference suggested in 1957. They arrived at a figure of 30% of the population who are below the poverty line, while the Reserve Bank of India in 1969 reported that the percentage of rural population was 70 in India with income below Rs. 18/- per month and this was equivalent to 50% of the total population.

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1. Government of India, Planning Commission, *Draft Fifth Five Year Plan* (1974-79), Part I, page 1.

The Fifth Plan document referred to the need for shifting the income of the highest income bracket to the lowest. But, nowhere in the document do they give a clue to the mechanism of such income transfers. The Planners have completely side-tracked the real issue, namely, the need for radically altering the relationship of production in agriculture and industry. If the Planning Commission had been true to their profession they would have started at the root of the problem of inequality of income and mass poverty, the inequality in the ownership of the means of production.

The experience of the last 26 years of independence has demonstrated that the most effective way of attacking mass poverty in the rural areas is to change the unequal ownership in land by giving the land of the landlords to the poor peasants and agricultural labourers. But, as the Planning Commission itself admitted in a report, in practically all the States in the Indian Union agrarian reform laws have been evaded because of political pressure and the ties between executive power and the landlords. The document does not provide any effective machinery for implementing land reforms even during the Fifth Plan.

How does the Planning Commission propose to raise the income levels of the rural poor? Do they propose any system of minimum wages? Of course, the document admits that "a statutory minimum wage should be an important device for raising the consumption of the poorer sections to the desired minimum". But, the document hastened to make a qualification that "it loses much of its significance for removal of poverty if it does not carry an employment guarantee with it". Thus, it is admitted that the landlords will continue to flout minimum wage laws even where they are enacted, and the rural poor will continue to remain unemployed and in poverty and misery.

Does the Planning Commission propose to restrict the incomes that will accrue to big capitalists and traders? No. In fact, it is stated that "in the case of well-to-do sections, it is not so much the accrual of income that has to be controlled provided that income is earned from legitimate sources as the disposal of accrued income". The Planning Commission allows the big capitalists to amass income through exploitation of the workers and

earn super-profits. Only after they have amassed huge incomes will the Planning Commission worry about how these incomes are disbursed. And knowing very well the *modus operandi* of big capitalists and the operators of black money, these incomes will be as evasive as the income taxes levied on them. Thus, in the absence of any firm commitment to the task of destroying the economic power of the big capitalists and black money operators, the statements about the need for transferring incomes of the upper 30 per cent to the lowest 30 per cent of the population remains meaningless tall-talk.

Regarding unemployment, the less said the better; because even according to the professions of the document, unemployment at the end of the Fifth Plan is destined to grow. Even if all the development projects are fully implemented, the additional jobs created will not be enough even for the additional labour force.

## II. Mirage of "Self-reliance"

The Plan has defined the problem of "self-reliance" in terms of "net zero aid". In fact, during the Fifth Plan period, India would require additional foreign aid of about Rs. 3,000/-crores. There will be a heavy debt obligation during the Fifth Plan, in addition to the heavy commitments for maintenance imports, estimated at 80 per cent of total estimated imports. The planners have used a convenient definition of self-reliance. To cover the actual additional foreign aid inflow in gross terms, they have deducted the outpayments for repayments and interest obligations, to arrive at "net aid". In fact it is possible to show that "net zero aid" can be arrived at even if the gross aid inflow increases every time, so long as outpayments for repayments and interest payments also increase to the same extent. This is obviously a fraud, a concept meant only to cloud the real issue.

There is a more vicious aspect of this tall-talk of "self-reliance". The slogan of self-reliance (defined in terms of government-to-government aid) is being used as a cover for increasing the dependence of the Indian economy on foreign capital from private sources abroad. This is clear from the new industrial policy announced by the Government of India in February 1973 whereby they made a major departure in their approach to foreign capital by throwing open a wider field to foreign capital penetra-



tion. Under the new dispensation industries producing commercial vehicles, paper, cement, plateglass, shipping, tractors, chemicals, tyres, ceramics etc. have been thrown open to foreign private companies. Even in sectors where Indian technology is well developed the Government of India have given permission for the entry of foreign capital and know-how. Thus, using the slogan of self-reliance as a cover, an open door policy is being pursued with respect to private foreign capital and collaboration agreements.

The recent development in the international monetary system, the virtual collapse of the US Dollar and its supremacy in the world, the ever-increasing inflationary spiral in India and the rest of the world, the increasing cost structure of our export products, resulting from inflation and unutilized capacity have all led to a situation in which all the hopes of the Government of India and the Planning Commission for a continuous and substantial stepping up of the growth rate in exports have been shattered. The oil crisis has aggravated the situation.

### **1. Foreign collaboration**

We are paying a heavy price for our collaborations with capitalist countries. Boilers installed by foreign collaboration have burst. Generators go out of action. Sudden stoppage of production takes place in fertilizer factories. An atomic plant with foreign collaboration had to be closed suddenly.

The capacity of the Rourkhela Steel Plant was estimated at 1.8 million tonnes; but now it turns out to be only 1.4 million. Durgapur's capacity was originally rated at 1.6 million tonnes; but it is now estimated at only 1.2 million.

During the last 26 years since independence, the Government of India have permitted over 3,600 foreign collaboration agreements. These exist even in such non-priority sectors as toothpaste, tennis balls and ladies' under garments.

Private foreign capital in India has grown from Rs. 256 crores in 1948 to over Rs. 1,400 crores. The total external assistance received by India till 1973 both from foreign governments and international agencies is Rs. 10,886.4 crores.

On March 31, 1974, the total foreign debt outstanding against the Government of India stood at Rs. 6,676 crores. While the Government of India was cheerfully contracting foreign debts for moving along the capitalist path of development, debt servicing obligations by way of interest payment and repayment of principal assumed menacing proportions.

## 2. Foreign control over India's export sector

The private foreign sector still continues to have a substantial control over our foreign trade, both exports and imports. Three important factors are responsible for this development. First, the foreign firms in India which are either subsidiaries of parent companies abroad or branches of companies incorporated abroad have intimate connections with export markets. The worldwide connections of the parent companies are directly utilised to the advantage of the subsidiary companies and branch firms. The established export outlets of the parent companies give a definite superior advantage to the foreign firms in India compared to the Indian firms. Secondly, the growth of monopoly power in the foreign sector and the organisation of industrial and trade associations among foreign companies have further strengthened the power of foreign firms to keep Indian industries from a considerable portion of India's export trade. Thirdly, the products in which foreign investors have come to specialise in India are mostly those which can command an increasing demand in the world market.

In spite of a certain degree of diversification in domestic industrial production, India's exports are still dominated by traditional products such as tea, jute and textiles. The primary products have been witnessing serious price fluctuations in the world market. The attempts made to stabilise commodity prices through international commodity agreements and the series of efforts made under the auspices of UNCTAD have so far been infructuous.

The experience of the last two decades of planning very clearly demonstrates that the objectives of our foreign economic policy cannot be achieved without radical changes in the pattern of our foreign trade and its institutional base. It is high time that the entire foreign trade operations were nationalised and a vigorous effort for diversifying our markets effected.

The objective of real self-reliance, thus, remains unattainable within the structure of policies and programmes pursued by the Government of India and the Planning Commission.

### III. Slogan of "Economic growth with social justice"

A detailed study of the dynamics of Indian economic development during the last two decades will show that within the framework of the policies of the ruling party neither economic growth nor social justice is being ensured, not to mention the oft-repeated goal of "economic growth consistent with social justice".

#### 1. Economic growth

During the decade, 1951 to 1961, the *per capita* income in India rose only at the annual rate of 1.7 per cent (compound). In the last decade, 1961 to 1971, the *per capita* income increased only marginally. In fact, the rate of growth of *per capita* income declined to about half of the earlier decade, that is to 0.8 per cent.

The *Economic Survey, 1973-74* admitted that national income had actually fallen in 1972-73 compared to the previous year.

"Although no firm estimates of national income are available beyond 1971-72, it is likely that in 1972-73 national income (at constant 1960-61 prices) showed a small decline."<sup>2</sup>

In the light of such a poor performance, how can we take seriously the claim of the Government that "in the year, i. e. 1973-74, however, it is likely that the rate of growth of national income will be about 6 percent"<sup>3</sup>? This is a pious wish which has no basis in reality. If we take the Fourth Plan period as a whole, the average annual rate of growth of national income is not likely to exceed 3.5 per cent compared to the original target of 5.7 per cent.

a) **Industrial production.** Industrial production is not picking up due to the wrong industrial and economic policies of the Government. Electricity shortages, the coal bunglings, high price of raw mate-

rials, serious shortages of all crucial products such as steel, cement, fertilizer etc., the close-down of industrial plants in the private and public sectors – all have contributed to the industrial crisis in India. In 1970 and 1971, the rate of growth of industrial production was just 3%. In 1972, the *Economic Survey* claimed a growth rate of 7%. A part of this increase was “statistical” because the Government decided to legalise capacity unauthorisedly installed in 54 critical [industrial houses were already producing] industries and later in 11 more industries. So, this so-called increase in production was only a “statistical jugglery”.

The *Economic Survey*, 1973-74 has admitted that, on the basis of available data for the first half of the calendar year 1973, “there was a small decline in the index of industrial production during the period”. The survey further notes: “Performance of certain critical sectors, such as, steel power and fertilizers was particularly unsatisfactory. On present indications, it is likely that growth of industrial production in the current year would be very low.”<sup>4</sup>

General index of industrial production  
(Base: 1960 = 100)

|           |      |       |
|-----------|------|-------|
| January,  | 1971 | 188.4 |
| December, | 1971 | 201.6 |
| December, | 1972 | 211.7 |
| January – |      |       |
| December, | 1972 | 199.4 |
| January – |      |       |
| June,     | 1973 | 196.2 |

Despite industrial stagnation and decline in output, the monopoly houses and the large-scale units have been reaping huge profits, and even super profits.

The gross return on the total capital employed by 201 industrial giants in the private sector in 1972-73 was 10.5 per cent. In the case of 39.8 per cent out of the 201 industrial giants, the profitability ratios showed an improvement.

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4. Ibid., page 3.



Among the private sector units, Pfizer, an off-shoot of a multi-national combine, secured the top place in 1972-73, earning the highest gross return of 32.6 per cent on total capital employed. Ceat Tyres had a profitability ratio of 26 per cent.

**b) Industrial licensing policies.** During 1973, the Government of India made a retreat in respect of industrial licensing policy. It announced a new licensing policy in February 1973. In the name of "removing the uncertainty regarding industries", larger industrial houses (monopoly houses) and also branches and subsidiaries of foreign companies have been given all kinds of concessions. Monopoly companies are given industrial licences to start production in even non-priority sectors if they export 60% or more of their products or are prepared to start industries in backward areas. In fact, these provisions are only a cover for the monopoly houses to enter into fields which were prohibited earlier.

No wonder that the monopoly houses have thrived well in India all these years. Not only did the share of the 75 monopoly houses in non-governmental, non-banking investments increased from 46.9 per cent in 1963-64 to 54 per cent in 1970, but even the total number of monopoly houses increased from 75 to 93 of late.

**c) Agricultural production.** Despite the much-quoted "Green Revolution", India is facing a serious crisis in agricultural production. The *Economic Survey, 1973-74* admitted that: "Agricultural output which declined by 0.8 per cent in 1971-72 registered a further sharp fall of 9.1 per cent in 1972-73.... Production of foodgrains as well as principal commercial crops, excepting sugarcane, declined significantly."<sup>5</sup>

For those who were complacent under the toxic effects of "Green Revolution in wheat", the *Economic Survey 1973-74* gave a big jolt: "Two disturbing facts about crop wise pattern of production in that year were: a fall in the production of wheat for the first time since 1967-68, and a sharp decline in the output of coarse grains and major oilseeds, particularly groundnuts." *Bitter Sugar:* In the case of sugar, the Government has been following a policy of fleecing the poor sugar-cane growers on the

one hand, and fattening the sugar magnates on the other hand. Sugar-cane producers suffer due to lack of incentive prices, lack of fertilizers and so on.

Sugar production in India (lakh tonnes)

|         |       |
|---------|-------|
| 1969-70 | 42.62 |
| 1970-71 | 37.40 |
| 1971-72 | 31.13 |
| 1972-73 | 38.72 |

The expectation of the Government that sugar production in 1973-74 will rise to 45 lakh tonnes is only a "pious hope".

The distribution policy of the Government has been characterised by a blatant attempt to enable the sugar magnates to reap super profits by selling the non-controlled portion of the sugar at fantastic market prices. Sugar has become bitter indeed. *Food debacle:* This year the total procurement of the rabi crop, mostly wheat, will be far below 5 million tonnes out of the targeted 8.1 million tonnes. This compares with the 5.6 million tonnes procured last year. Three-fourths of the target are to be met from the northern States of Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh. Except in Punjab procurement is lagging behind miserably. In a spell of breast-beating and self-criticism, it has been admitted that not many Congress landlords and rich peasants have sold their crop to the Government agencies. A rich bonanza of Rs. 150 crores spent on the emergency rabi programme, and the bonuses and incentives that fattened the rural rich did neither help the production of food nor its procurement.

Wherever hungry mobs have raided foodgrain shops, they have invariably found grain in large quantities. A hungry population, empty fair price shops and large stocks of hoarded grain with private traders have co-existed in the lean year of 1972-73. The traders are the very people who offered to procure more than the Government can dream of - seven to ten million tonnes - of course at high procurement prices of Rs. 76 to Rs. 85 per quintal. The Government has now offered a much higher procurement price of Rs. 105 per quintal and has de-nationalised the wholesale trade in wheat. The control of Vanaspathi is being withdrawn. Thus, whatever machinery was thought of for public

distribution of food and other essential commodities is thrown overboard.

It is now clear that by reimposing greater restrictions on inter-state movements of food and the introducing of greater compulsion by way of a producer levy on holdings above a certain size and the unloading of buffer stocks with better control on the chosen outlets, government could have avoided the severe shortfalls in its foodgrain issues to private stocks of trades.

Instead of taking effective steps against blackmarketers and speculators, the Congress governments both at the Centre and the States are protecting them. For instance, '*National Herald*' (Lucknow) dated December 20, 1971 reported:

"...the police has given V. I. P. treatment to alleged blackmarketers arrested in Safipur tehsil under the DIR. On enquiry it was found that the arrested persons were not only provided with bedding, cot and food in the police station but they were brought to the district headquarters in a taxi without being handcuffed - quite in contrast to the treatment meted out to many others arrested for minor offences."

In fact, the wholesale traders, blackmarketers and black money operators are so powerful that, along with the big capitalists and landlords, they have a powerful control over the political governments at the Centre and the States.

The lesson to be drawn from the debacle in the food front is that without taking over the entire marketable surplus of landlords, through a producers' levy, no scheme of monopoly procurement by the State can be successful. If the entire marketable surplus of landlords is procured it will be possible to supply foodgrains to all the vulnerable sections of the community through the public distribution system at reasonable prices.

## 2. Social justice or gross injustice?

There has been a deterioration in the living standards of the people. The *per capita* income of the rural people was about 27 per cent of the *per capita* income in the urban areas in the

First Plan. It declined to 24 per cent in the Second Plan, 20 per cent in the Third Plan and 18 per cent during 1966-71. It further fell to 17 per cent in 1972-73.

The economic and social policies pursued by the Congress Government have, therefore, increased the gap between the rural and the urban population. The poor peasants in the villages have been thrown into the ranks of pauper agricultural labour, as shown by the increase in the percentage share of agricultural labour in the 1971 Census in most of the States in India.

Industrial workers also had a raw deal. While the net output per worker increased by 495 per cent in 1969 compared to 1949, wages, adjusted for the rise in cost of living, increased by only 24.5 per cent. Thus, the increasing share of the wealth created by the workers has been amassed by the capitalists. According to a study made by the Reserve Bank of India, during the period 1965-66 to 1970-71, the share of workers and employees in value added in manufacturing decreased from 30.8 per cent to 29 per cent while the share of owners of property increased from 69.2 per cent to 71 per cent. Thus, the rate of exploitation of the working people in India by capitalists in the manufacturing sector has been increasing, despite all the tall-talks of "Socialism" and *Garibi Hatao*.

**a) Unemployment:** The spectre of unemployment haunts the youth of the nation and millions in the upper age groups of the working population. In March last year urban registered unemployment stood at 7.3 million of which 3.5 million were the 'educated unemployed.' Of the tens of millions of unemployed in the rural areas (the Bhagavati Committee made a gross underestimate of 16.1 million) some were employed in crash programmes during 1972-73. Paying a pittance for a full day's toil the Government is aiming at diverting the anger of the wretched from breaking out into struggles and militant action. Here again, the contractors, bureaucrats and landlord classes, more than anybody else, are the beneficiaries of the crash programmes which have been described sometimes as 'relief works for the rich'.

In every successive Plan, the Government has been spending larger and larger sums for investment. But the rate of un-



employment, instead of decreasing, has been rising by leaps and bounds. Unemployment in the eve of the First Five Year Plan was 33 lakhs, (that is, people who were totally unemployed). It increased to 187 lakhs, in 1971, according to the estimate prepared by the Bhagavati Committee. In other words, unemployment increased by 5.7 times during the two decades of planning.

The Government now claims that employment in the organised sector has increased during last year. This is a statistical fiction, because, the increase in employment in the organised sector is more than nullified by the decline in employment in the unorganised sector, particularly due to large scale retrenchment of workers from traditional industries, due to power shortage and the shortage of various essential raw materials, and the deepening economic crisis in general. Moreover, the taking over of various units in the public sector has meant a shift of employment from the private sector to the public sector. In fact, unemployment has been increasing at an alarming rate, as shown by the figures of the employment exchanges. In Gujarat, a study made by an economist of the Gujarat University, Mr Jitendra Dholakia, showed that during the period 1960-61 to 1972-73, unemployment as indicated by the employment exchanges registered an increase of 362 per cent.

The rate of growth of unemployment continues to be faster than the growth of employment opportunities. For instance, while the number of job-seekers in the live registers of the employment exchanges rose by 13.5 per cent from 58.68 lakhs in June 1972 to 64.57 lakhs in September, 1972, the employment in the organised sector increased by 1.27 lakhs or a percentage increase of only 0.7. According to official estimates, the number of job seekers on the live registers of employment exchanges rose from 34.5 lakhs in March 1970 to 44.4 lakhs in March, 1971 - a rise of 22.2 per cent in a year.<sup>6</sup>

**b) Inflationary rise in prices.** The Government of India continues to tread the dangerous path of inflationary financing and galloping prices. The index of prices which was 100 in 1948 increased to 316 last year. In one year alone, the price index showed an alarming increase of about 20 to 25 per cent. In fact, this is the

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6. *Hindustan Times* (New Delhi), January 19, 1973.

official figure. The real fact is that prices of many commodities increased by as much as 50 per cent and 75 per cent. According to conservative estimates, prices of meat, eggs, mustard oil, vanaspathi, biscuits and butter increased by 30 to 50 per cent recently.

The inflationary rise in prices of most of the products of mass consumption has resulted in a reduction of purchasing power. The real income of the workers has been continuously eroded through deficit financing and inflation. As admitted by the Union Finance Minister in Parliament recently, the value of the Rupee was eroded to the extent of 19 per cent in one single year from 1972 to 1973. On top of this the Congress government has added burdens in the form of higher prices for petrol and kerosene. Immediately after the presentation of the budget the Government increased the price of petrol and kerosene by 34 paise and 15 paise respectively per litre. Cooking gas price was raised by Rs. 1.02 per cylinder of 15 kg. The Government has also raised the price of controlled cloth by 30 per cent, thus helping the mill owners to a mass profit, while the ordinary consumers are fleeced further.

Increase in the prices of grains in India affect very badly the 38 per cent of the people in rural areas and 22 per cent of the people in urban areas who earn less than 50 paise per day, as about 60 per cent of their earnings is spent on grains and substitutes.

The rupee today has been reduced in value to such an extent that even relatively high income groups are finding it difficult to make both ends meet. For instance a Junior IAS Officer's salary of Rs. 720 per month today is equal to an Assistant's salary of Rs. 193 in 1954-55 or a Lower Grade Clerk's salary of Rs. 55 in the pre-war year.

Government spokesmen have made pathetic attempts to explain away the massive inflationary spiral by describing it as a 'global phenomenon' or 'passing phase' or something that was caused by extraneous circumstances such as Bangladesh liberation, Indo-Pakistan war and so on.

It is increasingly clear, however, that the staggering problem of price rise cannot be diagnosed without examining the basic elements in the economic system and the dynamics of its functioning. The wrong economic policies pursued by the Government resulting in decline in industrial growth rates, substantial unutilised capacity, imbalances created by the so-called green revolution, mounting burdens of an iniquitous tax policy, deficit financing, wasteful public expenditure, growth of monopolies, increasing foreign collaborations in even non essential commodities, high-handed operations of hoarders, speculators and blackmarketers, inefficiency of the public distribution system and the black money economy operating alongside the open economy, are some of the deeper causes of this malady.

**c Parallel economy of black money.** While the Indian economy (that is, the legally constituted economy) has been passing through continuous stagnation and crisis after crisis, a parallel economy of "black money" has grown, assuming massive proportions. The Wanchoo Committee described "black money" as a "cancerous growth which if not checked will surely lead to ruination". The majority report of the Wanchoo Committee, estimated concealment of incomes at Rs. 700 crores in 1961-62 and Rs. 1,400 crores in 1968-69. According to the estimates made by D. K. Rangnekar, a member of the Wanchoo Committee, the incomes which were concealed to avoid taxation, amount to Rs. 1,031 crores in 1961-62 and Rs. 2,833 crores in 1968-69. In other words, concealed incomes have been growing at the rate of 13 per cent per annum, that is, at a rate higher than the growth in national income, in money terms of 11 per cent during the same period.

One of the misconceptions regarding black money is that it is a "stock" of cash or other valuable assets. In fact, black money should be viewed as a "flow" of black incomes, a flow which is facilitated by the control which certain powerful and shady elements of the capitalist-landlord system exercise over the process of production, distribution and exchange of goods and services. The significance of this analysis is that black money cannot be controlled by merely taking over these assets at any moment of time. At any given moment only a part, probably a small part, of the black money incomes is held as idle assets; the major proportion is continuously in circulation, financing all

kinds of shady transactions, wholesale trade, construction of posh or luxury apartments, and speculative investments in land and in business, thus distorting the Indian economy and its normal functioning. Unless the sources of black income generation are destroyed, such incomes will continue to flow and perpetuate the black money economy.

d) **Increasing tax burdens.** The anti-people policy of the ruling party is clearly embodied in the various taxation laws and in their budgetary policy in general. While they shed crocodile tears for the poor people they actually go on increasing the tax burdens on the people through higher and higher dose of indirect taxes which fall on the masses of poor people. For instance, the total indirect taxes collected by the Central Government in 1963-64 was Rs. 1079 crores. But it increased to Rs. 2812 crores in 1971-72 and to Rs. 3106 crores in the budget, 1972-73. It is shocking that, precisely during the last two years when such slogans as "Garibi Hatao" and *Arthik Swaraj* have been bandied about, the heavy burdens on the people in the form of crushing taxes were introduced. While indirect taxes increased by Rs. 294 crores from Rs. 2,812 crores in 1971-72 to Rs. 3,106 crores in 1972-73, direct taxes showed only a small increase of Rs. 88 crores, from Rs. 1034 crores in 1971-72 to Rs. 1122 crores in 1972-73. According to an admission of the Union Finance Minister, Shri Y. B. Chavan, in the Lok Sabha on April 2, 1971, "The *per capita* tax burden increased by 19.7 per cent between 1968-69 and 1969-70".

#### IV. Social oppression: the problems of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes.

##### 1. Untouchability

The experience of the last 26 years of independence, particularly the years since the adoption of the Constitution in 1950 and Untouchability (Offences) Act in 1955, prove that untouchability, a curse of Indian society for thousands of years, cannot be eradicated through constitutional and legal measures alone. The practice of untouchability is interwoven with the feudal and semi-feudal land relations in the rural areas and the religious and ideological superstructure of the bourgeois-landlord power structure in the economy in general.



The Untouchability(Offences) Act 1955 has remained virtually a dead legislative piece. Offences in connection with the practice of untouchability have been committed in increasing numbers and intensity in state after state; yet the penal provisions of the Act have seldom been used to curb such crimes.

In many places where scheduled castes have tried to assert their rights, rich landlords, money-lenders and rural oligarchies have resorted to social boycott and *Nakabandi* to bring them into submission. Out of fear, the aggrieved persons do not come forward to lodge complaints with the police. Even when such complaints are lodged, the police either do not register the complaints or dissuade the aggrieved persons from pursuing them. When the complaints are registered, the police do not conduct the cases properly. And in the rare cases when the offence is established, only nominal punishment is awarded by courts; for instance, in one case a fine of Rs. 5 only was imposed. There are also instances in which the Scheduled Caste persons who lodge complaints with the police are subjected to third-degree methods to force them to compound the cases. No wonder that the number of cases in which offences under the Act are punished is an infinitesimally small proportion of the total number of crimes actually committed. In Punjab, during the period from 1969 to June 1972 the total number of cases registered under the Act was only 15. Out of these, 2 cases were compounded, 9 cases acquitted and 4 cases were pending in the courts. Conviction was possible only in 2 cases. The situation in other states is no better.

The overwhelming majority of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes live in the villages. Their emancipation is dependent upon the abolition of all forms of social and economic oppression by landlords, money-lenders and the caste-minded village oligarchies in general. The occupational structure of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes also indicates that their economic uplift cannot be achieved except as part of an over-all strategy for solving the poverty and unemployment problem among the rural poor, particularly the agricultural labourers and poor peasants.

The problem of untouchability is more complex and deep-rooted than what is apparent from reports of caste conflicts and

prejudices. Whatever the special circumstances are in which the caste system developed in India, in the conditions of today, that is, in the conditions of developing capitalism, caste oppression and exploitation have acquired a new socio-economic class content. The oppression of Harijans by landlords and money lenders is no longer on the basis of mere caste prejudices, but is intensely related to the economic interests. In the intensifying class struggle in the villages, caste prejudices are relied upon by landlords and money lenders to perpetuate their class rule.

The capitalist path of development pursued by the bourgeois-landlord State required the accumulation of huge surpluses. These are being appropriated through an inhuman exploitation of the working people. The agricultural sector bears a double burden in this respect. First, it has to provide surpluses for the industrial sector. Secondly, it has to raise resources for its own development. Compared to industrial labour, agricultural labour, consisting mostly of Scheduled Castes and Tribes, it is subject to a system of double exploitation. The traditional caste structure in India has been modified by the super-imposition of class exploitation.

In this struggle, the Indian State is not a passive onlooker. The political leadership, the administrative and police machinery and the judicial courts, are all responsible for the perpetuation of the crime. These instruments of State power are, in fact, active instruments on the side of bourgeois-landlord classes.

Untouchability is rooted in a culture based on social and economic exploitation. Abolition of untouchability, therefore, is possible only by abolishing the socio-economic system which breeds and protects exploitation of man by man.

The problem of untouchability, and indeed all the major problems concerning the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, can be solved, in the ultimate analysis, only through a revolutionary change in the socio-economic and political structure in India.

Land is the key link in the emancipation of Scheduled Castes and Tribes. The ownership of land in the rural community, by its very nature, enhances social status and economic indepen-

dence and reduces the chances of social oppression. Unless the monopoly hold of landlords, both capitalist and feudal, on the agricultural land in the country is broken through radical land reforms and the surplus land distributed to landless agricultural workers and landpoor peasants, social oppression including the practice of untouchability cannot be effectively curbed. The spread of literacy and education and the guarantee of gainful employment are equally important measures in this direction.

## 2) Labour policy

The labour policy followed by the Government of India has been by and large, one of open confrontation with labour, denying them even legitimate trade union rights. A policy of virtual "wage freeze" which is being implemented has resulted in a fall in the real wages of the working people. Instead of bridging the gap between the rich and the poor which the government professes to do, this labour policy leads to widening of the gap, as wage freeze measure will only help the employers, the big monopoly bourgeoisie and the landlords, to accumulate wealth at the expense of the poor. The policy of 'moratorium' on strikes would in effect mean the use of brutal force to suppress the workers' demands and deny collective bargaining. The labour policy of the government thus reflects the very core of the capitalist economy.

Wherever people have unleashed struggles against the wrong economic policies of the government, the coercive instruments of the state have been employed in the most inhuman manner. The Government has applied draconian measures such as Defence of India Rules (DIR) and the Maintenance of Internal Security Act (MISA) to meet protesting marchers and demonstrators. Under MISA alone, more than 10,000 persons have been put behind the bar. The challenge of the rising tide of mass struggles is proposed to be met by the intensive use of the repressive machinery of the army and police.

In recent years even highly paid employees and officers, doctors, engineers and so on are in struggle. But, how does the Government meet this situation? Instead of changing their economic and political policies, the Government has chosen to declare

a war against the people struggling for their legitimate demands. That is why they have increased the expenditure on Police and other repressive organs of the Government.

The expenditure on Central Police in 1950-51 was only Rs. 3 crores. It rose to Rs. 25.27 crores in 1964-65 and to Rs. 130.91 crores in 1972-73. In the Budget estimates of 1974-75, the expenditure for Central Police is Rs. 156.05 crores. Including the expenditure on capital account this will come to Rs. 169.39 crores.<sup>7</sup>

## V. Alternative policies for economic and social development

The philosophy of planning which has guided the planning process in India so far has been borrowed mainly from the Western capitalist countries, though the vocabulary of Socialist planning has been superimposed on the Western notions as a political tactic to confuse the people.

One of the ingredients of Western philosophy of planning is the unquestioned presumption that planning is a purely "economic" phenomenon. Any discussion of socio-political phenomena is invariably discounted as "politics", beyond the scope of discussion of the "planner", who is defined basically as a pure economist, an econometrician, a statistician or a technocrat.

Another ingredient of the Western philosophy of planning is, what may be called, the G. N. P. biased concept of economic growth or development. A given investment of resources is expected to produce a given output income and employment. The planner only needs estimates of capital output ratio, capital-labour ratio, capital intensities, a broad picture, inter-industry balances, and a few other co-efficients and relationships. Using a mathematical model, he feels confident to "plan" for the nation. Unfortunately for our country, this kind of philosophy has had a long lease of life both in the Planning Commission and in academic circles.

The bitter lessons which have been learnt during the last 27 years of independence tell us plainly that the above philo-

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7. See Demands for Grants of the Ministry of Home Affairs 1974-75, Demand No. 48, page 32.



sophy is not only too simplistic in its conception, but positively dangerous if it continues to lead us in our development process.

Any alternative approach to planning and development in India, if it has to have any meaning to the vast masses of the working people, must make a complete break with the above notions borrowed from the West. First, we must accept the reality that "planning" and "development" are primarily political processes. Without a thorough grasp of the significance of "political economy" involving the inter-relationships between socio-economic and political processes, and without an appreciation of the nature and growth of power structures in rural and urban centres, there can be no meaningful or effective planning in India.

The starting point of all exercises in planning should be identification of the nature and causes of the economic crisis in India. The basic questions to be posed in this connection are: Who controls the means of production and in whose interests? What is the pattern of distribution of value added between owners of property and those who work and create value? Which are the classes or groups which stand in the way of the fuller utilisation of the existing productive forces and for their continued expansion? Which are the social forces which stand as obstacles to the development of society and which are the social forces which must unite to remove these obstacles? These are the basic questions which anyone interested in "development" of the society – as 'motion' in terms of history – should raise.

Intead of merely postulating a certain growth in GNP or *per capita* income in the country, the most relevant question should be how far the share of the working people in value added can be increased. In the Indian context, for example, we know that workers and peasants and the middle classes receive an ever smaller share of the wealth they produce. Official figures show that between 1959 and 1966, while the ex-factory value of the output increased by 168 per cent, employment in absolute terms increased only by 37 per cent. While the per person value of output increased only by 64 per cent, surplus value appropriated by a minority group of property owners increased from 42.3 per cent of value added in 1959 to 45.5 per cent in 1960.

A detailed study of the power structure in India will show that there are three main obstacles to development. They are: i) Monopoly capitalism. (ii) Landlordism and (iii) Imperialism and its various manifestations.

It is also clear from such a study that if these three obstacles are to be removed, it is necessary to unite all other classes and groups of people, the workers, peasants, middle classes, intellectuals, small and medium producers in industry – in short, all those who are prepared to fight and defeat the above three main obstacles.

The commitment for “development” is, thus, a commitment for liberation or revolution which implies a complete change in the power structure. It is in this context that the struggle of the workers for need-based minimum wage and bonus for all, the struggle of the peasants for taking over of surplus land of landlords extra-legally and non bureaucratically, by their organised strength, the struggle of the people for a complete change in the class character of state power and so on became the central themes of developmental economics. It is not the intention of this paper to work out all the details of this approach to development. It should be the endeavour of all those who subscribe to the concept of political economy to work out the details fully in the years to come.

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# Political Parties

It is absurd to speak about a value crisis without clarifying the meaning of the term 'value'. Though a detailed discussion of values is not possible here it is necessary to define the scope of the word. In our day-to-day life we compare and contrast things, ideas, behaviours, sentiments, events and whatever else related to our mental processes, with something. Before anything is compared or contrasted we establish, at least implicitly, in our mind the idea of a basic value. It is to this value that we have recourse whenever we evaluate things and events. It constitutes or explains beauty, goodness and morality. So the fact that our values are deeply rooted in the metaphysical thinking of man should not be ignored. They can be personal as well as social. One man's value may be another man's anti-value.

Though the expression of values changes from time to time the basic or simple values such as truth, love, justice are always revered and respected. All other values are in one way or other evolutes of the simple or basic ones. Teachers of morals are always anxious to perpetuate those values and their anxiety is not altogether meaningless. They have been there from the very beginning of the history of culture. It would appear that values are on the decline. On the other hand the so-called values which appeared under the mask of genuine values to safeguard vested communal interests may seem to be in peril. Take for example the concept of private property. There was a time when the right to private property was considered unquestionable. Now the uncontrolled right to private property is being questioned. Is this a case of a regrettable decline of values? An emphatic 'No' should be the answer. It is not the simple values themselves that have changed but certain absolutist approaches to the basic values is under fire. Yesterday's truth may be today's falsehood and yesterday's justice today's injustice. Why does it happen? Because the circumstances are changed. So what is just today may become unjust tomorrow. However, truth, love and justice are always respected. To those who entertain a rigid conception of values this may seem a paradox or an anomaly. Whatever the attitude of

conservatives this is a fact to be reckoned with. When it is said that the concept of values has become more flexible it need not be concluded that values are necessarily relative.

### **The impact of values in Indian politics**

Before dealing with the impact of values in the political arena of India something is to be said about the specific character of Indian politics. Almost all the political parties of India are under the octopus pull of the communist and socialist ideologies. The influence of communalism also is clearly evident in Indian politics. So the members of each political party play a double role. Even while strongly denying all the traditional values, they extol to the skies democratic or materialistic principles for political advantages. All the same they exploit communal feelings to climb the ladder of political power. In this perspective Indian politics is Marxian in principle (perhaps a deformed Marxism) and essentially oriented to communal and private interests. All parties without any exception include communalists. Unfortunately the very same values which political parties extol are denied to the people at large on the basis of communal interests. Thus double-dealing at ideological level has its repercussions in practical life too. The result is no clear-cut purpose or goal-orientation in Indian politics. It is against this background that one should try to evaluate the contribution of the political parties to the value crisis in India.

### **Decline of the "so-called values"**

Those who exploit values as a mask or castle to safeguard the *status quo* will, of course, clamour that all is lost, when they see the 'so-called' values collapse and crumble. This complaint is untimely. Still the fact that a change took place should be recognized. Whether this change should be considered either as a crisis or a decline or reconstitution of values is yet another problem. Whatever it be values which were once held in high esteem and safeguarded by the people who sweated for them and shed their blood are on the decline in this age. In the ethical, moral or religious realm or in that of financial transactions, marital relations or those of the family, this decline of values or change in the concept of values is evident. The moral degeneration in politics is acute and deplorable. Communication media and edu-



cation itself are making propaganda that thwarts time-honoured and eternal values. It is not easy to hold a particular group of people responsible for this and it is absurd to do so. Political parties are a part of society. The good and evil seen in society at large are reflected in political parties too. We need not debate whether seed or the tree came into existence first. But at the same time there arises a dispute whether the political parties reached society in its present condition or society created the political parties. The solution of this problem is not in the air. It is an often heard cry that the political leaders in order to attain their selfish motives adulterated society and pushed it to a degenerate condition. Mr. C. Narayana Pillai in his book *The Liberation Struggle of Travancore* wrote: "There are certain values which man considers supreme and divine and necessary for the very existence of the world. And nobody has any right to ignore or break them down. It is a great crime against humanity to make the nation a grazing field of those who have recourse to every unworthy means to attain their petty temporal and political ends. The fact that such criminals are the staunch proponents of a socialist pattern of society is deplorable. All the political parties affirm the necessity of such a social order."

The ideals for which the political group stand may be supreme. But unchecked self-interest, avarice and the rat-race for power and position lead to moral degradation. Even if the leaders of a political party are selfless and disinterested and filled with noble and lofty ideals, their followers might make this a means of petty self-interest. Is there any substantial relation between the message of Gandhiji and of the Indian National Congress of the past and the ways of the present-day Congress leaders?

C. Narayana Pillai says: "The upright people of this country will not excuse even Mrs. Indira Gandhi's government which speaks about lofty ideals and philosophies sitting at the peak of progress, if it allows opportunist and fifth columns (political beggars) to climb the ladder of Congress". It is true that political parties do many things in Indian politics which any upright group may not endorse easily: it is no wonder that they speak of a crisis.

## Political corruption

Today wheresoever we turn we hear of corruption, labour disputes and student unrest. No doubt political parties play a major role in creating all kinds of trouble on different planes. Corruption has become part and parcel of our day-to-day life.

There prevailed a time when people looked upon corruption with contempt and then political scandals were dealt with, with due seriousness and utmost impartiality. That remains a memory of the past. Today corruption has become rampant even in high circles and an ordinary phenomenon. When the late Mr. T. M. Varghese was a minister a mahogany tree was cut down in the premises of his official residence. Nobody was concerned with such questions as whether it was cut for his personal use or sold at the right price or whether the tree was really mahogany. Still he was accused of corruption. When this is compared with the subsequent deforestation of vast areas, how insignificant becomes the mahogany scandal? Yet it sparked off a serious political crisis.

Again corruption charges were levelled against Sri. E. John Philipose, the then Transport Minister. The question was the buying of buses. He immediately resigned and filed a suit against Annie Mascreeen who had accused him of corruption. He thus proved his innocence before the public. Nowadays no minister resigns to prove his innocence by filing a case against the accuser. Society does not insist on this. Who can throw the first stone but the one who is sinless?

It was only after the year 1957 that corruption was naturalized in Kerala. It was a powerful weapon against the Communist ministry. The then Food Minister Mr. K. C. George was charged with corruption in connexion with a rice deal with merchants in Andra Pradesh. Justice P. P. Raman Nair was the one-member commission to make an investigation. Mr. George did not pay heed to the tradition of Mr. E. John Philipose. Even though dubious circumstances were pointed out in the investigation report, the minister did not resign. The Communist ministry, however, was stamped as corrupt.

When in 1960 the Congress-P. S. P. coalition ministry came to power, the same charge of corruption was raised against it. A chain of accusations was brought against the Sanker ministry. When corruption was present on a grand scale it was not taken seriously. Finally the members themselves of the Congress Party accused R. Sanker and Damodara Menon of corruption. Even at the risk of a split in the party the Congress High Command, without consenting to an enquiry, was on the move to save the corruptors, for corruption had by then got national recognition.

In 1967 there was an avalanche of charges levelled against the second cabinet of Mr. E. M. S. Everyone except the Chief Minister and the Muslim League Minister was subjected to accusation and investigation. The judges who investigated these cases had to proceed like horses in blinkers. Circumstantial evidence was not convincing to them, and it is not easy in such cases as corruption and favouritism to go beyond this. Yet almost all the Ministers came out tainted with corruption.

Now it is easy to see the far-reaching effects of the proliferation of corruption both in the party and in the ruling group. When the ministers and party workers are steeped in corruption it is futile to expect officials to keep their hands clean. So the corruption, nepotism and favouritism seen among those who hold the reins of power, have multiplied at all other levels. Now the corrupt ministers and party workers are unable to check the officials who are not clean. Money is the sixth sense of man. Transfer, promotion, appointment, success in examinations and everything else are determined by money. Corruption exists now on a grand scale or a small scale according as the situation allows. The time when the bribers were looked upon contemptuously is gone. Honesty is the worst policy today! The greatest contribution which our self-interested politics has secured for us is the nationalization of corruption! It is well-known that we are a corrupt nation and corruption has weakened us. K. Santhanam wrote in *Swarajya* that it is universally recognized that corruption is the single greatest evil which is ruining our politics and casting doubts on the integrity of politicians, fairness of elections and impartiality of administration.

### Politics, student unions and labour organizations

Students and labourers are the two most important organized groups in India. The political parties have considerable influence on them. The competitive spirit among the political parties in forming their own student wings and labour organizations clearly shows the importance of these pressure groups in Indian politics. But then it is certainly suicidal to corrupt these two groups in whom lies the future of the nation.

From the time of the struggle for the dismissal of the first Communist ministry in Kerala students have been stooges in the hands of politicians. Today they are being exploited to the extreme. Student leaders who have used them as stepping-stones to their success are their very heroes. They pay lip-service to ideals and their personal and public life is complex and disorderly. They cheat the public by bearing the mask of ideals and their private life has nothing to do with those ideals which they preach. Prospective student leaders closely follow in their foot-steps. The people who secured a pass in the examination through political influence are like the drones of the hive. The grand legacy which they leave behind for the followers is that politics is the most profitable business. So they too eagerly enter politics to secure their livelihood. Student leaders and political leaders fish in the troubled waters of student agitation. Are they the stalwarts of the lofty ideals of justice and truth? Not at all. The political leaders who exploit the student community for their goals will create only a chaotic society for the future. Those who cry out that there is no Nair, Ezhava or Christian blood in their veins but only human blood, may parade as the bitter enemies of communalism. It is a paradox, however, that these staunch proponents of "human blood" have no faith in human brotherhood which is one of the greatest contributions of Christianity. They often vie with each other and try to pull each other down on the communal basis to get a job or power or position. They are the foster-fathers of injustice, corruption and black-marketing. The students are not the only group responsible for this. The political leaders are to be blamed first and foremost. We cannot expect a better sense of value from our politicians than that of a prostitute who preaches chastity. What then will be the conditions of the students led by these politicians?



The same is true of the labour organizations. Often the masterminds behind labour organizations are political leaders. Their main occupation is to give leadership to the unorganized labour groups and instigate them to strikes under the party banner. They never make the labourers conscientious about their responsibility but at the same time strongly insist on their right to agitate and to go on strike. A labour group which is irresponsible to its duties and overconscious of its right to strike and use any foul means is detrimental to the nation. Why does this happen? Because our political leaders lack foresight and an all-embracing vision. They have no idea about the values on which the future society is to be reconstituted. The politicians lose sight of the fact that a socialist pattern of society is in the hands of a labour group which has strong faith in the dignity of labour and the common welfare. Because they lack foresight and vision they deny all values in order to attain certain petty temporal interests. In an article entitled 'Where has socialism gone?' a labourer wrote thus: "It is not a leadership which victimises both the people and workers to attain its own narrow political interest that the trade union needs... It is not befitting to trade unions to set fire to the nation and laugh at when it burns."

### **The heart of the matter**

Where is the heart of our socio-political evils and maladies? Political scientists and philosophers may differ in their opinion. The opinion of Sri J. B. Kripalani, one of the stalwarts of Indian politics, seems to be quite opportune. He begins with the question "What does our society and nation actually need today? In my opinion, they are, first and foremost, honesty and integrity in the political and administrative fields."

Both the politician and the administrator are the instruments through which the nation is to work and prosper. If they are faulty and not in good order, all the undertakings, however wise and well planned, will fail. Let us not forget that all revolutions in history have taken place because the ruling classes were corrupt and inefficient.

It seems that Sri Kripalani aims at the restoration or reconstitution of values. Purity and sincerity are to be re-estab-

lished in the place of prevailing corruption and deception. For genuine values are the custodian of an upright and perfect society.

Service is no more the ultimate end of politicians. All political parties aim at power. And the same is the root cause of the morass existing in values. Corruption in every field is the net result of this decline. No party can escape the responsibility of the evil effects caused by power politics and corruption. The ruling party which constantly controlled the nation since independence must take the major responsibility in this moral and ethical decline in the country. It is well known to everyone what the multi-millionaire detainees under the M. I. S. A. say about the ruling party. The smugglers boldly declare that they bribed certain ministers and helped others to win the election. Nobody dare deny the accusation. The ruling party consists of such gentlemen who visit the smugglers at night in their posh hotels and at daytime severely criticise them.

Impartial elections lay the foundation for democracy. Would the roof stand without a foundation? Corruption reaches its high peak in this country during the time of general election. Mr. Jayaprakash Narayan, the Sarvodaya Leader, recently remarked that the elections here have ceased to reflect the democratic will of the people. For he said that money controlled the elections here. He rejoined that elections fought and won in the manner they are, can bring democracy into mockery. Loss of faith in democracy will spell disaster to the country. The judiciary has on certain occasions proved the illegality and invalidity of certain elections. What else may happen in a nation steeped in corruption where a cabinet minister who was forced to resign for using illegal means in election has been honoured by being offered a governorship?

Sri J. B. Kripalani in one of his recent articles in the *Indian Express* has made a detailed analysis of the corruption in the national elections. All the decline in values in our democratic system can be traced back to the original sin of corruption. Sri Kripalani is of opinion that unless this stigma is blotted out democracy and socialism will remain a mirage. The opinions of political leaders like J. B. Kripalani and Jayaprakash

Narayan fall on deaf ears. We will not be able to liberate ourselves from corruption till we correct our political perspective.

### **A deformed social order**

Dr. Johnson once remarked that politics is the last refuge of scoundrels. If he were alive today he might have said, politics is the first and only resort of scoundrels.

Such political ideals as nationalism, democracy, secularism, equality, social welfare etc. have become by repetition mere slogans. In politics all principles yield to the power motive. It is a reservoir of hollow pledges and promises. Since the ordinary public is illiterate and its political memory is short any political ideology is sold anywhere in India. The fundamental principle of power politics is that ideals and opinions are not maintained forever. Those who are eloquent succeed in politics and politics is filled with prolific statements and impossible pledges. Politicians train society in double-dealing. Heroes of the people are those who accomplish this well.

The politicians impel the students and the youth to indulge in violence and violation of laws. They do it under the hypnotic impulse of the slogans of the leaders. Authority is challenged everywhere. Parents and teachers are considered mere walking machines. Many take for their goal uncontrolled freedom in everything. Politicians look at religion and religious authority with contempt. Here starts the decline of all time-honoured and traditional values including those of religion.

This kind of deformed democracy and truthlessness will not stand for long. The moral and economic crises caused by vested interests will shock at least a minority. In a democratic country when the exploitation becomes unbearable the intelligentsia will rise in revolt against all its values. That is why the number of people who favour totalitarianism is on the increase. Nobody can deny the fact that there is a crisis in values.

Today the nation faces a serious economic crisis, but its origin lies in a moral crisis of the most dangerous type. Foreign aid and a favourable economic climate may alleviate it to some

extent. But then will we have turned the corner? Material progress without a strong and sound moral order is weak and futile. A government which is inept and inert at this crucial moment poses the greatest ordeal to socio-political progress.

What is the core of this moral degeneration? It is to be found in a people and their leaders without any social sense. They are quite ready to indulge in bribery for any slight favour or service. The pathetic condition of our nation is indeed explosive.

### **The positive effects of politics**

Whatever has been said about the value crisis all over India is true also of Kerala. When we think about a value crisis all over India, and in Kerala in particular, we should bear in mind the constructive function of politics as well as the destructive effects. Where does the present crisis lead us to, something better or something worse? Is it a decline or a restoration? It is not wrong to say that under the leadership of the corrupt political parties there takes place implicitly a restructuring of values. The present degeneration may bring a pleasant dawn. It is said that every denial implies an indirect affirmation. Thus the denial of values finally may result in the affirmation of values. Are the political parties destructive to the nation and the value system or have they made any positive contribution?

That all men are equal is a long-cherished ancient principle. When men held fast to the religious values it was argued, quoting philosophy and theology, that man was created in the likeness of God. But in practice we have never carried out the oft-preached principle of equality and fraternity. As a sequel to feudalism and capitalism there has grown a number of social discriminations in India. Religion and religious authority confirmed them under the pretext of destiny. Nobody rose in revolt against such social discriminations. If they are blotted out to a certain extent it is due to the laudable work of political parties. This means that their denial of values had a double effect. Economic inequality was considered a value to be preserved and cherished. But that time is gone and socialism has become the favoured value of the day. If today a worker is in a position to demand fair wages



for a job it shows the growth of a noble value. The rich who exploited the poor working classes were unjust and that social order has been changed. It was the politicians who inspired the under-dogs to revolt against such social evils. Political consciousness enabled them to become conscious of their right to live up to the level of human dignity. Politically-oriented student agitations have checked the corruption in private colleges. The political consciousness of the people has put in shackles the unlimited power of religion and religious authority. Consequently the religious authorities have made a retreat to their specific field and have begun to concentrate more on their unique roles. There was a time when the religious authorities canvassed for the power politicians. They sometimes even publicly involved themselves in politics to safeguard religious values. Some of the idealists made power politics an inaccessible area for religious heads. This was a positive contribution in the line of the reconstitution of values. Today no religious head commands his followers to vote for a particular party and, even if he does so, nobody would heed him.

This particular political situation in India and especially in Kerala has helped the Church a lot to rethink her message and goals. Politicians were indirectly reinvigorating the degenerated Church. In the relation of the Church and politics in Kerala there seems to have been a divine power at work in its history.

The golden age of King Maveli is only a vain dream to-day. The thirst and zest for such an age indicate man's longing for a welfare state. Maveli is dismissed to the other world. Material prosperity is the measure of everything. There begins the decline of values. Money gave birth to classes and castes and the politicians are on the move to create a classless society through a class struggle. They opened the eyes of the poor and the down-trodden and were ready to fight the rich, tooth and nail. They effected the land ceiling and labour Acts. The exploited group attained freedom and self-awareness. This has been due to our political sensibility.

Thus in this impartial evaluation of Indian politics there is on the one side the deterioration of values and on the other side the growth of a new social and ethical order. To a certain extent the so-called politicians were the better custodians of the

values than the hypocritical defenders of values. Both of them bear a mask. It seems that here comes the real crisis of values. Values are still at the cross-roads. It will go on indefinitely until the hypocrites and the politicians under the mask change their attitude and try to preserve and entertain basic values. Unless they make a united effort they may not be sincere to themselves. Their cry about the value crisis seems to be meaningless. Insincerity and double-dealing are dangerous symptoms in a 'crisis of values'.

The Deepika  
Kottayam

Alexander Paikada

(Translation: S. Poonoly)

## Philosophy and Literature

Value is the price that we give for something that we receive; what we receive is life, and what we give is value. Value is that which sustains us. There is no survival without values. A more apt word in the Indian context is *Dharma*. It is dharma that supports the world. Its decline spells disaster at all levels. The very basis of dharma is truth. Truth is all in all. It is beauty and goodness. It is love and grace. It is eternal being. It keeps us in holiness and generates infinite good.

If dharma is of God, how can there be any crisis in its realm? The leading Hindu philosophers of India affirm that Truth is inviolable and invulnerable. It is one without a second. Hence no crisis is ever possible in the world of ultimate reality. But there is the world of appearance, not a second world but a world of illusions built of man's ignorance which like "a dome of many-coloured glass" stains the white radiance of Truth; and here the crisis is a reality however apparent it may ultimately appear

to be. The advaitins would argue that the world is too much with the modern who is bogged down in ignorance. As such his struggle for liberation and the attendant anguish are more perceptible now than at any time before. He "feels that he is moving from non-being to non-being, rather than to being, from darkness to darkness rather than to light and from mortality to mortality rather than to immortality". He continues to be a slave, lamentably so as he is everywhere in fetters. Unnerved as he grossly mistakes the rope for the serpent he has lost his manliness. He seems to have been irrecoverably lost in a cycle of birth and death. He is trapped in an anguish from which there seems to be no exit. Yet he makes desperate efforts to come out, exploiting the four *Yogas* expounded in the *Gita*. The crisis becomes manifest as their *yogas* taken out of context of the integral structure to which they belonged and applied in the modern context are deplorably distorted. The yogin who through *yama*, *niyama*, and *manonigraha* reaches the *Jīvanmukta* stage enjoys supreme bliss. But seldom do we see even in the Indian Hindu milieu authentic attempts at practising this great ideal.

Of the four *yogas*, the *raja yoga* has become widely accepted by the youth in the West. Here they come across an accessible eastern physical discipline conducive to bodily well-being and a rigorous mental discipline essential for mystical contemplation. But few had an understanding of the spiritual milieu in which the doctrine of *yogas* was conceived. As a result the ecstasy aimed at in *raja yoga* as practised by Western youth is basically escapist and in quality not very different from the hallucinatory experiences of the drug-addict. *Bhakti yoga* adapted to the modern situation in the West has given birth to the Hare-krishna movement, very similar in spirit to the movement of the drop-outs and beetles of the hippy clan. The great idea that the *yogas* are spiritual exercises has been lost sight of. The Western youth utilises it just as forms of protest against the materialistic acquisitive urge of its capitalist society. What has been originally conceived for the liberation of the human spirit has thus degenerated into a form of social revolt leading to a type of personal retreat and an insensitivity to all values earthly or spiritual.

The intellectuals of India are more influenced by *karma yoga* and *jñāna yoga* than by the other two. For one thing they reject the escapist tendency of the practitioners of the *raja yoga*; for another they disapprove of the histrionic hysterics of the Hare-krishna cult. In *karma yoga* man attains liberation through unremitting acts untainted with selfish motives. In *jñāna yoga* *mukti* comes in the process of an incessant quest after truth. Both these yogas are in consonance with the spirit of our times and go at least half way to meet the spiritual needs of our age. But they also present problems too difficult to resolve. The exponents of *karma yoga* do not believe in transcendence, the personal God, or even eternal values seriously in their day-to-day acts. Nehru was perhaps the greatest *karma yogin* of modern India. He upheld such ideals as humanism, secularism and socialism without relating them to any transcendental faith. The practice of these ideals has been to a great degree possible with such a great mind. But lesser minds have made a mockery of these ideals and exposed the weaknesses of *karma* theory. For what is the criterion of action in the *karma yoga*? Each is expected to discharge his duties in conformity with his nature in the given context? Who is there to define these duties? And when duties clash, is there any possibility of the settlement of differences except in fights. Life has often been presented as an arena where we fight for survival. But are there fair norms in the fight accepted by all? All is fair in a war that is fought exclusively on the earthly plane. This attitude has coarsened secularism which has no clear vision of the values on which the secular life is to be built. And this leads to a type of neopragmatism searching forth roots in the *karma* theory. The crisis becomes acute in the realm of values as the idea of the dispassionate act of *karma yoga* combines with the situational ethics of pragmatism to evolve contextual codes of conduct for the modern. Humanism of the *karma yoga* does not help resolve the crisis. Who is man in the *karma* theory? What are human values? Even if we concede that the whole world is one nest, where the whole humanity perches, has anyone defined the structure of the nest in detail? It is futile to expound the tenets of humanism without any clear-cut concept of a perfect man. Gandhiji knew this and went to Rama who alone could resolve every crisis for him. Nehru was too intellectual for that, but he had the greatness to accept Gandhiji as his master. And so far did he actually succeed. But not so the neokarma yogins



of vain professions and misdirected resolutions which can scarcely claim the name of action.

And finally we turn to *jñāna yoga* with highly raised expectations. It stimulates the mind and equips it for the exploration of the ultimate. But it seldom delays in the ethical realm. Anguish and frustration are caused by ignorance, as the *one* appears as two. But knowledge obliterates all differences and annihilates all fears, including those of total extinction. It dissipates the distinctions between the beautiful and the ugly, love and lovelessness, being and non-being. The enlightened is the *Jīvanmukta* who is freed from the world of differences. He is beyond good and evil, beyond the three *gunas* and this renders him ineffective in the area of life where the war is fought between good and evil. The search for truth involved in *jñāna yoga* is valid, it confers authenticity to one's being, but too often this search becomes too much self-centred and subjective. Also it fails to attain a social dimension so essential for the rejuvenation of our morale. We have in Aurobindo and Ramana Maharṣi the greatest of sages who taught us that the yogas have not lost their relevance to modern times. Aurobindo's integral yoga is perhaps the most significant of modern eastern contributions to spirituality. But both Aurobindo and Ramana Maharṣi effected a retreat from the world of day-to-day life and its value system, and as such how may one invoke the experiences of these *tapasins* to tackle the crisis in values at the existential level. One therefore grows naturally sceptical about the efficacy of the *jñāna yoga* to help man grapple with the non-being which is evil in this world whose evolution in time is but history.

None of the yogas advocated in the *Gītā* seem to have been interpreted with their special ethical relevance to the modern times even by such doctors of Hinduism as K. M. Munshi, Raja Gopalachary, or Rādhakrishnan. None of them could expound the doctrine without equivocation. But there was one supreme exception, that of Sri. Ramakrishna Parama Hamsa. He was concerned with dharma at the existential level: the sad music of humanity had moved him to tears. Here was a *Jīvanmukta* who was in the world, but not of the world. Vivekananda preached to the world the teachings of Sree Ramakrishna. Jnana Jogins of his calibre could have restored dharma. Unfortunately we

never had men of his stature to take up his torch and continue the race. The result is that Hinduism has not come out with any dynamic system of thought responding to the exigencies of the modern situation created by an encounter between traditional values and the modern outlook on life. The Gita does not give any direct answers to the ethical questions raised by urbanisation, family planning, or the conflict between the classes.

Many thought that Marxism interpreted in the light of the Gita would be a panacea for all the socio-politico-economic ills. It is not difficult to relate the *Samkhya* or the *Advaita* to the Marxist doctrine. Marxist interpretation of matter and dialectical forces at work in history do not run counter to the *advaita*. Marxism has been acceptable to many who found the humanism of Christianity refreshing even as they despised its dogmas. Marxism does not speak of everlasting *dharma*, its evolution of *dharma* is contextual. Conflict, dialectical conflict at that, is a truth in history. In and through conflicts social values are generated, but they are of no permanent value. The basis of all values is man; what dehumanizes him is his exploitative urge which is perpetually whetted in the capitalist society by his craze for the acquisition of wealth. The Marxist puts the blame for this on the basic structure of the present society. When the basic structure is changed the exploitative urge shall be rooted out and the new man of the future like Prometheus Unbound shall emerge in a classless society. Though Marxism as a doctrine may not be in conflict with *advaita*, in the social, economic and ethical realms it has created a crisis in values. No doubt it has brought to the people a new social awareness of their rights and the urgent need for social justice. But in the political field applied Marxism in India has had devastating effects on the codes of social conduct. It is alleged that political opportunism, rigorous party discipline, denial of individual freedom, violent revolts and unwarranted strikes and a host of other evils have been unleashed by the communist parties in India. Far from being helpful in solving the crisis in values, Marxism has aggravated it, though this in itself has its positive contributions in an authentic search for truth in the present socio-economic set-up.

Though most of the leftists of the elite in India are disillusioned with Marxism as worked out in India, the Chinese

example holds their rapt attention. Has Mao succeeded? If so how? Which has been more humane?—democracy with its exploitative basic structure or communism based on the big idea of social justice. Perhaps the supreme human value is justice. If the so-called democracy is without this basic value what is it worth? In Indian democracy man is not economically free, the social structure is corrupt. Under the cover of human freedom man is exploited by man. Any violent outburst against the system is ruled out in the name of non-violent and peaceful progress of society. If the earth as a whole belongs to humanity justice has to prevail in a world without oppressors or the oppressed, without the rulers or the ruled, in a world where man is free from all bondage. In a campaign for the establishment of such a world many a structure has to be shattered; bloody revolution becomes inevitable. How can those who cry for justice be condemned? That is why the pastors and priests of Latin America find much in the Marxist doctrine acceptable. They plead so vigorously for liberation. The mighty in their pride shall be dethroned; the destitute shall be restored to their strength. This shall come to pass if love as a human value is to have any relevance in the given context. Love is nothing if not justice. But should justice be blind? Cannot justice be brought about by ways other than of a bloody revolution? And does economic justice guarantee equal opportunity to everyone for the full development of his personality to each according to his potentiality? What is the being of man according to Marx? Could it explore the nature of its essence? Once again the complexity of the predicament comes to the fore. The crisis is already there.

The path from modern schools of philosophy to modern literature is straight. In the West men of letters felt that there was a chasm between the traditional past and the shaken present. It is as though the flow of history is arrested. The ideological background of faith and values is buried in the past. Nihilism came to dominate literary field. There was revolt against the conventional and the traditional; faith in transcendent truth was on the wane. The values cherished were materialistic rather than idealistic. The moderns gradually moved to the position that life is absurd. "Nihilism lies at the centre of all that we mean by modern literature". A precursor of the modernist school, Bandelaire, wrote

about the flowers of evil. Andre Breton repeatedly proclaimed that death is the ultimate truth. The Surrealists trusted in the spontaneity of psychic automatism and delighted in singing of death the eternal symbol of futility. Camus gave a new stance to the absurdity of life. He pointed out that life was as absurd as the myth of Sisyphus. Evil is the essence of man. It is true that he longs to be freed from evil for good. The son of man was born on earth; suffered the anguish of existence and died on the cross. But he never rose from the dead; and grace has not come to man. And the story of man continues as it is without any significance, without any meaning. He moves from nothingness to nothingness. This awareness makes one insensitive to everything. The road from Ivan to the outsider is smooth and clear. Nothing matters to the outsider. Mother died, but what of that? The same day or the next, it does not matter, he went out with his girl friend. What of that? And there under the hot sun of boredom he shut down that Arab. Yes he did it. May be we are trapped in a "vestibule". May be we are in the font into which the dove has not descended. As it is, one is in liquid fire. But the heart has been rendered insensitive long long ago. Sartre overcomes anguish in a mood of absolute negation. His Geotze proclaims, "I was killing God - for God alienated me from other men. But now I am doubly alienated". Freedom is the highest value for Sartre, but it rises out of the ashes of the traditional values. Genet is derealizing characters to expose their reality as non-being. Ionesco and Beckett and Albee endorse this interpretation each with a difference. A character in *Waiting for Godot* says 'Here nothing happens, no one comes, no one goes from here, this is awful'. Another character repeatedly says 'let us go'. But no one moves. The characters feel that everything will vanish into nothingness. This expresses the mood of the modern. Another idea dear to the modern is the cyclic movement of life suggested by Spengler in the *Decline of the West* and stressed by Seerts in his '*Second Coming*'.

We may cite a few writers in Malayalam to suggest how grave the crisis is in our cultural field. Traditional values continue to be upheld by such literary doyens as P. Kunjiraman Nair, G. Sankara Kurup and Ooroobu. We have also powerful works on religious themes such as *Viśwadeepam* on the life of Christ by Mathew Tharakan and the lyrics of Sister Benigna. These positive contributions are but the obverse of the coin. Look at



the reverse of it in the writings of N. V. Krishna Warriar, Ayyappa Panikkar, Kakkadu, G. Sankara Pillai, Kakkanadan, Mukundan, and O. V. Vijayan. We may look at a few lines from 'False Gods', 'The Underworld', 'The Invocation of Death', 'Epilogue', 'Witness', 'Delhi' and 'The Epic of Khasak'. N. V. points out in the 'False Gods' that the lamp of pure reason has been vainly lighted to propitiate a host of false gods over the ages. Are they worthy of our adoration, man, animal, bird, snake, fish or tree, mountain, river, the circle, the triangle or the quadrangle, the genitals of man and woman, form, the formless? All are decayed, sick and dead. Is this the great temple of man? Lifeless idols, do we adore them? Quite true. These Gods are dead, and buried; Vayalar sings that temples and churches are built over the grave of these gods. But has there been any God emerging? Not yet. Not likely too; for death is supreme. Hear how Ayyappa Panikkar invokes death.

"Let the heavy cold come  
 Let the dense darkness come  
 Let the vain love of death come  
 Let him hold me in his snake like arms  
 Let him hold me close".

Alas - the cry for light and light is hushed for ever. And now we hear a cry of a different note. It comes as invocation.

Hail Death, Hail, Hail Death

Sree Panikkar tries to substitute atheistic humanism for positive human values in the wake of death.

If we are enlightened  
 We need not be in the shade of the tree of enlightenment  
 (of the Buddha)  
 If we could be men even for a while  
 We need not sing the song of Calvary.

But what is it to be a man? If life be a cyclic process has humanism any relevance?

Kakkadu is of the view that the world we live in has already become a region of the nether world? "Here the sun is not born, nor the sun doth die. This is a world of selfishness,

monstrous and demoniac, worthy only of the monster. So the poet invokes the lord of darkness:

Lord monster come with thy attendants of scorpions,  
eagles, demons,  
 And embrace me digging deep into my skin  
 Your teeth and nails.

How selfishness has its ecstasies here? In his 'Epilogue' or the 'Word of Bharatha' G. Sankara Pillai underscores the evil in man. The ultimate truth is here nothingness. The hero of the play deceives his father, his sister, his guru, his wife and finally himself. Finally he falls into an abyss of death and nothingness from which there is no escape. What he mistook for heaven was in reality this chasm of nothingness.

The crisis of values is poignantly brought out in modern novels. To many of the modern novelists life is absurd. For some unknown reason at some point their anti-heroes become insensitive, and then everything is permissible to them, drug, wine and women. Look at Sivan in the 'eqyatiruk reguib' becoming self-centred and impervious to idealism after his disillusionment with Marxism. There are Aravindan in 'Delhi', Narayanankutty in 'Witness' and Appu in 'This world and a Man therein' and Ravi in 'The Epic of Khasak'—all cast in more or less the same mould. They seek liberation from the world of ethics in a frantic effort at liberating themselves from their alienation and subsequent anguish. Drugs offer them psychedelic dreams: woman is often a refuge from obsession with life. She is the womb of death, the most tragic of all states of peace. And then there are characters in this novel that remind one of pseudo-buddhas who have apparently transcended time. The modern anti-hero experiences the agony of an alienated soul. He feels that he was brought into the world without asking for it. He was as such thrown into sheer desolation. He is a seeker, he is bound by no ethics, no dogma, no creed. He is totally free, yet trapped in the bondage of existence. He has no values. He does not hope to be sustained: he shall not survive. The utmost he can do is to express himself in art. The most effective way of overcoming the absurdity of life is to express life as absurdity and by a realization of it repudiate it. The modern novelists care only for one value, namely

sincerity. But is their interpretation of life the authentic version, or perversion or deliberate distortion? For there are often notes echoing the mood of the age as powerful as these of the moderns. We have for example the novels of Vatsala, Kovilan and Vilasini and the poems of O. N. V. Kurup, Vishnu Narayanan Namboodiri, Sugatha Kumari and Akkitham. They too question traditional values but they do not derealize life as nothingness. What is important for them is the formulation of the anguish of the deterioration of moral values in poignant tones.

But what is the solution for this problem? One would agree with the modern that the highest of values is sincerity which enjoins upon one truthfulness to oneself. It is this that is deplorably missing in the realms of philosophy and literature. If one were to adhere to truth one would be with Heidegger in the quest for philosophic truth, and one would rate Dostoeivsky supreme rather than a Kafka or Sartre in one's quest for truth in the cultural realm. And to such as those who are willing to move far above and beyond these, religion still holds forth values that have not lost their lustre by the passage of time. But it presupposes a discipline that made a boy of the past respond to the voice of the Lord saying - "Speak - that thy servant may hear." But can we listen? Perhaps not, anyway not yet. And the crisis continues.

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# The Crisis of Values in the Catholic Church

## Introduction

I begin this article on a personal note. Originally I was asked to write on "Values in Crisis in Religious Institutions and Associations". This appeared to be much too vast a topic to handle in a short essay, and I did not feel particularly competent to deal with it. So I have chosen to discuss the crisis of values in the Catholic Church. Here I can fall back on my personal experiences and reflections. What is said here about the Church will, I hope, throw some light on the situation in other religions as well.

Today the Catholic Church is passing through one of the most critical periods in her entire history. Like every historical institution the Church finds it extremely difficult to meet the challenge of the modern world. At a time when rapid and radical changes are taking place on a global scale, how is she to update her structures and organise her activities so as to respond to the needs and aspirations of contemporary man, without being unfaithful to the mission entrusted to her by Jesus Christ? This is the crucial question, which is at the root of the tensions and conflicts we experience in the Church today.

Obviously there are different ways of looking at this situation. Some believe that this points to a crisis of leadership in the Church. Others regard it as a crisis of faith or of obedience and loyalty. In the last analysis it is a crisis of values, primarily caused by the wide gap that exists between those implicit in the life of the Church and those publicly proclaimed by her. Probably there is a real division in the very perception of values. Terms such as freedom or justice do not have the same meaning for all Catholics<sup>1</sup>, and it is most likely that we do not agree on the same hierarchy of values.

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1. Cf. S. Kappen, "The Future of Christian Education and Christian Education of the Future", *Jeevadhara* 13, p. 65.



## Centrality of man

In the Church today there is a consensus that man occupies a central place in the scheme of things. According to Vatican II "All things on earth should be related to man as their centre and crown" (GS 12). The Council is here merely echoing the Scriptural testimony that man is the most precious being on the face of the earth (cf. Gen 1:2 -29; Ps. 1:4ff).

We should, therefore, expect to find in the Church a genuine appreciation of man and a real concern for his growth. Instead, there is an unmistakable tendency to treat human persons as mere objects. In the words of Morris West, "We, the faithful, are legislated for, written to, talked at, talked about, mourned over, prayed over, censured as subjects or objects of scandal, as though we were the proles in some vast crypto-Christian socialist state. We have no voice in the assembly of selves."<sup>2</sup>

The Second Vatican Council did indeed speak of "Reverence for the human person" (GS 27). But the leaders of the Church often take decisions with scant respect for the people affected by them. The laity are frequently made to feel that they have no rights in the Church. Most of the time they are denied any say in the appointment of their pastors. In many instances, priests are treated as mere cogs in the ecclesiastical machine. Some are 'exiled' overnight to remote corners of the dioceses for disagreeing with their Bishops in matters of policy. They are forbidden to form priests' unions, because these seem to threaten the power-structure in the Church. Dissenting theologians are sometimes treated in ways that show no regard for their human rights.

The maintenance of the system, the preservation of the *status quo*, appears to be the main preoccupation of some Church leaders. At different levels of the ecclesiastical organisation - the parish, the diocese, the C.B.C.I. and the Roman Curia - cleverly concealed efforts are often made to manipulate persons and affairs. In the Church today it seems as if laws, doctrines and institutions exist for their own sake, not for the welfare of man. There has been a sad reversal of the uncomfortable saying of

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2. M.L. West, "Causes of Disquiet in the Church", *Concilium*: 6 (1970) 1, p. 16.

Jesus: "The Sabbath was made for the sake of man and not man for the Sabbath" (Mk 2 : 27). "We remember wryly that the marriage courts have a personage who is called *Defensor Vinculi*, but that there is no *Defensor Personae*".<sup>3</sup>

### Primacy of love

What is basic in Christianity is not man's love for God but God's love for man (cf. 1 Jn 4:9-19; Jn 3:16). We are called to believe in this love and to live up to its demands. Love for one another is the characteristic mark of the disciples of Jesus (Jn 13:35). The Church is meant to be, above all, a community of love.

Many Christians are surely trying to make love the moving force of their lives. The fact that many of them lead hidden lives is no reason for denying their existence.

There is undoubtedly plenty of lovelessness, too, in the Church. So much of the harsh criticism levelled against nuns, priests, bishops and the Pope today is without a trace of love. It is true that concerned criticism, unlike cold indifference, shows that one really cares. Still, when some people can see no good whatever in the Church and its leaders, when they take delight in condemning everything, we begin to wonder if they are inspired by genuine love.

The fault is, of course, not all on the side of the critics. The behaviour of the authorities of the Church is often a negation of Christian love. They administer the Church in a bureaucratic way. They enforce laws and exact discipline in a dictatorial fashion. They treat dissenters harshly. All this is far from the spirit of the Good Shepherd whom they profess to follow. Authority in the Church, we are told, is loving service, but it is not commonly experienced.

A glaring instance of the lack of love in the Church is our utterly unchristian conduct towards the priests and nuns who leave the ministry or give up religious life. This applies also to the young men and women who discontinue their seminary studies or

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3. *Ibid.* p. 18.

quit the houses of formation. I am not here concerned about the motives which impel them to take this step, though no doubt many of them are justified in doing so. In any case, it is none of our business to sit in judgement. What is really baffling is that many 'good' Catholics, including nuns, priests and bishops, look down on these people and regard them as "traitors". Do we not have any concern for their welfare? Are we justified in excluding them from the scope of our Christian love?

The conflict between the younger and the older generations in the Church also manifests a certain lack of love. Neither side shows sufficient sympathy and understanding in regard to the difficulties of the other. Brought up in another atmosphere, the older people learned to cherish a different set of values. Many of their views are perhaps not quite relevant to this time of change. But it is humanly impossible for them overnight to adopt a radically new life-style or to renounce values that gave meaning to their lives till yesterday. Young people should try to understand this. On the other hand, the older generation must realise that the world is changing fast, that today's young people have quite a different attitude to life, and that they should not stand in the way of human progress. At any rate, neither side should call in question the sincerity, the loyalty and the commitment of the other.

What we urgently need in the Church today is genuine tolerance. Not the tolerance of indifference, where one does not care for the other, but the tolerance born of Christian love, where one respects the right of the other to be different.

### Value of freedom

Karl Rahner once wrote: "St. Paul spoke of the freedom of the Christian. After that, this particular topic was no longer mentioned very much."<sup>4</sup> This remark points to an anomaly in the Church. On the one hand, we cannot forget those ringing words of Paul: "For you were called to freedom, brethren" (Gal. 5:13). "Christ set us free, to be free men. Stand firm, then, and refuse to be tied to the yoke of slavery again." (Gal. 5:1) On the

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4. K. Rahner, *Theological Investigations* II, 1963, p. 89.

other hand, we may not deny the enormous amount of unfreedom in the Church today.

I have met many Christians – nuns, priests and laity – who do not feel sufficiently free to think for themselves, to speak their mind openly, or to act according to their convictions. How many of our Bishops are truly free and have the courage to hold convictions and to act on them? I do not know. But one feels that most of us are enslaved by the power of the ecclesiastical structure. This has succeeded in making us afraid of freedom. To think independently, we fear, would land us in heresy. Refusal to comply with every prescription of the hierarchy would be equivalent to disloyalty to God.

Human freedom is surely a risky thing, as it carries with it the danger of failure. We can abuse our freedom and make a mess of our lives. But lack of freedom is even more dangerous. Human beings can grow and develop only when they are free, and a system that deprives man of their freedom in the name of security or orthodoxy condemns them forever to infantile immaturity.

This and the lack of an adult mentality are very much in evidence among many Christians, not excluding priests and nuns. They constantly complain about the authoritarianism of bishops and religious superiors but cannot “muster either the energy to fight them effectively or the self-reliance to ignore them.”<sup>5</sup> They do not seem to realize that true freedom is something which they must achieve for themselves. No one else can make them free.

There are many reasons why Christians experience a lack of freedom. Very often they are deeply affected by selfishness or a sense of insecurity. Many of them are subject to a variety of pressures – religious, social or economic. The leaders of the Church sometimes impose unnecessary restrictions on the faithful. What is remarkable, however, is that the ‘reformers’ who are clamouring for greater freedom do not always show suffi-

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5. A. Greely, “The Catholic Action Ideology: An Appraisal”, *The Critic* 32 (1974) 6, p. 18.



cient respect for the freedom of others. "Since the Church is," observes Rahner, "also a Church made up of sinful men, even as far as the holders of her authority are concerned, she can also in her individual actions offend against her own principles and against the freedom of the individual both within and without. This has happened often enough in the course of history. It can happen even today. And this is what the Church must guard against, for today more than ever she must be the champion of true freedom."<sup>6</sup>

But how can she do so in a credible manner, unless there is genuine freedom within the Church?

### Quest for truth

Not long ago Walter J. Burghardt, wrote an article in *Catholic Mind* under the title, "From Certainty to Understanding: The Exciting Pilgrimage of Contemporary Catholicism".<sup>7</sup> In it he first explored the search for certainty that dominated Catholic thinking for centuries. This was followed by an inquiry into the quest for understanding that is relentlessly replacing the search for certainty. Finally came a sketch of the tensions which this crucial displacement has created within the Church.

This is a very perceptive analysis of our situation. For a long time we gloried in the confident possession of the truth. We adopted what Avery Dulles calls "a supernaturalistic rationalism in which revelation was conceived as a divinely imparted system of universal and timeless truths".<sup>8</sup> And under the influence of Descartes we tended to identify dogma with revelation and to insist on the immutability and certitude of our dogmatic formulas. Only gradually did it begin to dawn on us that revelation is not primarily a communication of truths, but God's salvific intervention in human history. We are now slowly realising that God's revelation cannot be encapsulated in formulas. In fact, human language has only a limited capacity to express truths about God and his activity.

6. K. Rahner, *op. cit.*, pp. 99-100.

7. *Catholic Mind*, 67 (1969) 6, pp. 13-27.

8. A. Dulles, "Dogma As An Ecumenical Problem", *Theological Studies* 29 (1968) p. 400.

Even now, fidelity to the dogmatic formulations of the past is regarded as a sign of our commitment to God's truth. But this is not necessarily true. More often than not, such fidelity reveals an unhealthy preoccupation with certitude, not any real concern for truth. Every dogmatic formulation is inevitably time-bound and culturally conditioned. At best, it is a finite, imperfect and inadequate expression of a revealed truth. At worst, it is a one-sided statement that unduly stresses a particular truth which was called in question at the time. In any case, since times have changed and words have acquired new meanings, the routine, mindless repetition of an ancient formula necessarily falsifies the original insight. What is required today is a serious effort to rediscover the meaning of the Christian Revelation in the context of India today.

Our "dogmatic bias" is doing a lot of harm. "Such bias inhibits all radical questioning and even methodical doubt. It prevents Christians from effectively participating in the contemporary quest after the ever-new horizons of truth. It also condemns them to the pitiable condition of having to reject every new idea, but only to be forced to relent in their opposition as the idea in question becomes widely accepted, and finally to come on the scene to sanction and legitimize it. Such an approach can only make them suspect in the eyes of the younger generation."<sup>9</sup>

There are other disturbing factors that make us wonder if the Church is really interested in a genuine quest for truth. The leaders of the Church are often allergic to any questioning of the official line of thinking. Some of them are greatly afraid of a free and frank discussion of the problems now facing the Church. The Catholic press does not always enjoy adequate freedom. In fact, some of the Church's own periodicals are well known for biased reporting and the suppression of unfavourable news.

### Christian hope

The Church is essentially a community of hope. For St. Paul, Christians are those who have hope (cf. Eph. 2:12; 1 Thess.

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9. S. Kappen, *op. cit.*, p. 64.

4:13). In fact, the basic category of Biblical Revelation is promise.<sup>10</sup> God makes promises and the people respond with hope. In the call of Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3; cf. also Heb. 11:8-10), in the exodus experience (Ex. 3; 14; 40) and the preaching of the Prophets (Is. 2:2 ff; 7:14 ff; Jer. 31:31ff; Ez. 36) God promises Israel land and prosperity, deliverance from slavery and a new covenant of peace.

The New Testament also has a message of promise, and, consequently, of hope. True, with the death and resurrection of Jesus, the final age of the world is come upon us (cf. 1 Cor. 10:12). But the resurrection is itself a promise (cf. 1 Cor. 15:20-28). As J. B. Metz says, "The proclamation of the resurrection of Jesus which can never be separated from the message of the crucifixion, is essentially a proclamation of promise which initiates the Christian mission. This mission achieves its future in so far as the Christian alters and 'innovates' the world toward that future which is definitely promised to us in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The New Testament is therefore centred on hope - a creative expectancy - as the very essence of Christian existence."<sup>11</sup>

Much of the stiff resistance to change that we find in the Church today points to a lack of Christian hope. Karl Rahner once remarked that it is a sin against hope to refuse to change. The implication is that hope demands that we should be always forward-looking and forward-moving. "For here we have no permanent home, but we are seekers after the city which is to come" (Heb. 13:14). Unfortunately, we tend to treat the past, as absolute and to be enslaved by tradition. But Christian hope asks us to regard every stage in the growth of a person and every phase in the development of the Church as being provisional. It has to be transcended. We are still on our way to the final kingdom. We are the wandering people of God.

It is a sad commentary on the followers of Jesus that they have often been the defenders of the *status quo*. Even now many of them dare not challenge the existing unjust social order. All

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10. Cf. J. Moltmann, *The Theology of Hope*, 1967, esp. pp. 37-84.

11. J. B. Metz, *The Theology of the World*, 1969, p. 89.

the same "it should be the destiny of the Church of Christ to live in a continuous tension with every kind of established order that is not open to the hope of still more justice, freedom, effective brotherhood".<sup>12</sup> In the light of our eschatological hope, we should engage in a radical and constructive criticism of all unjust social structures.

### Orthopraxis

Christ's Gospel is not, in the first place, an intellectually satisfying doctrinal system, but a challenging way of life. Christians are called upon to be doers of the word, not just hearers (cf. Mt. 7: 24). This is of special significance in our day when under the influence of Karl Marx *praxis* has become the touchstone of truth. Today it is not so much the logical consistency of our theology as the authenticity of our life that will show the meaningfulness of the Christian faith. An elderly priest had probably this in mind when he remarked: "Six days of the week, people are watching me to find out what I really mean when I preach on the seventh day." Unfortunately our lives often contradict our words.

We should, then, lay greater stress on *orthopraxis* than on *orthodoxy*, on the authenticity of Christian lives than on the purity of Christian doctrines. Church history bears witness to the fact that in the past, truth was often defended at the cost of love. Even in our own day the leaders of the Church have, in their zeal for Catholic dogma, thrown to the four winds such Christian values as love, justice and respect for the human person. Not infrequently it happens that people who pay lip-service to Christian doctrines and champion the 'rights' of the institutional Church are highly esteemed in ecclesiastical circles, even though they are notorious for lack of moral integrity.

Probably our failure to 'produce' many committed Christians is largely due to the type of Catholic education we give. Ours is basically a system of 'indoctrination'. We have, we believe, the truths of revelation and our main job is to impart them. The fact of the matter is that indoctrination rarely leads to

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12. R. Tucci, "New Politics for Christians", *America* 125 (19 1) p. 114.



commitment. Only those insights that a person has gained through reflection on his living experience will deeply affect his life. If this is true, then we need radically to do some rethinking our educational practice.

### **The absoluteness of God**

The absoluteness of God belongs to the core of the Biblical revelation. Both the Testaments bear witness to it (cf. Dt 5: 6-7; 6:4; Mk. 12: 29), and all Christians would admit it, atleast theoretically. But whether it is evident in their life is another matter.

Money, power and prestige are the golden calves frequently worshipped in the Church of God today. Many Christians are engaged in the mad pursuit of them. Power politics is the name of the game, that is being played at all levels in today's Church. Catholic educational and charitable institutions are often effectively used to win power and influence people. There is at times a neurotic pre-occupation with the good image of the Church. Even unchristian methods are sometimes employed to safeguard the reputation of the Church. Is God still the only Absolute?

Unfortunately there is an incredible dearth of genuine spirituality in the Church today. In spite of the abundant devotional practices among Catholics, men with a real experience of God are hard to come by. Non-Christians often admire the efficiency with which we run our institutions. They appreciate the dedicated service shown by Christian missionaries, but very few of them look to us for guidance in the search for God. The tragedy is that in this land of mystics, the Church has nurtured so few. The need of the hour, it has been said, is for men who have seen God, men in whom God can be seen.

Our liturgy, too, has largely failed to mediate an authentic experience of God. There is an undue insistence on rites and rubrics, on law and structure, in our common worship. We cannot, of course, deny the need for some general norms in this matter. Otherwise, there will be utter chaos. But sufficient room must be left for responsible experimentation. Since life is so rich and varied, meaningful liturgy which is the celebration of life will always be free and spontaneous, at least to some extent. Let us, then, give up all rigidity in this matter, if we really wish to have

a living liturgy, not empty ceremony. We should also, create or adopt signs and symbols that are intelligible to the people in India today. But even the most carefully prepared liturgical service will soon lapse into empty ritualism, if the participants do not engage in personal prayer. Serious reflection on the deeper dimensions of life is a 'must' for anyone who desires to have a true experience of God in the public worship of the Church.

### Conclusion

The different aspects of the crisis of values in the Catholic Church have been briefly sketched. A crisis is not only a danger but also a challenge. It offers us a golden opportunity for an agonising reappraisal and reorientation of our Christian life. If we are prepared to make a radical response to God who is challenging us through this crisis, then the future of the Church will be bright indeed.

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# Social and Religious Values among Catholic Youth in Kerala

Our approach to religious phenomena will be sociological. It does not imply that we reduce the religious factor to this aspect alone, denying its theological or psychological dimension. The sociological approach is important in many ways: It permits us to understand, for instance, the changes which affect religion and the religious life in a society like Kerala today, as the consequences of the process of modernization. We have to remember, as a matter of fact, that, in a traditional society, religion occupied a central part of the culture.

We see today, that with the development of scientific knowledge, the introduction of a new economical organisation and the diffusion of ideologies, the traditional social functions of religion are affected like the other components of the culture. This is a fact easily understandable through a sociological analysis.

Another aspect of the social dimension of religion which is particularly important when we deal with religious attitudes of groups is that group attitudes are not the sum total of those of each of the members. On the contrary, we may say that most of the time, individual attitudes are very much influenced by the cultural pattern of the group to which each one belongs.

Table 1: Attitude toward the Church (self-evaluation) of Catholic Youth in Kerala

| <i>Attitude</i> | <i>Students</i> | <i>Rural Youth</i> | <i>Fishermen</i> | <i>Workers</i> | <i>Employees.</i> |
|-----------------|-----------------|--------------------|------------------|----------------|-------------------|
| Hostile         | 2.4             | 3.5                | —                | 2.4            | 3.0               |
| Indifferent     | 28.2            | 22.5               | 15.1             | 55.6           | 46.3              |
| Committed       | 43.5            | 45.5               | 47.2             | 29.4           | 29.9              |
| Very committed  | 24.1            | 21.7               | 37.7             | 10.3           | 17.2              |
| No answer       | 1.8             | 6.8                | —                | 2.3            | 2.9               |
|                 | <hr/> 100.0     | <hr/> 100.00       | <hr/> 100.0      | <hr/> 100.0    | <hr/> 100.0       |

Why was this object of research chosen? The reasons are twofold. First, because of the numerical weight of youth in Kerala society, where 40% of the whole population are less than 15 years old and 60% less than 25. Secondly, there is the social weight of youth. In every society, young people are more sensible to social and cultural changes than their elders. But, in Kerala there are two other factors: the fact of the high level of education of youth through the school system; the fact also, that young people, more than the others, are the victims of the economic situation - of the one million unemployed, 66% are less than 25 years old and 80% less than 30. To avoid a too easy stereotyping of "youth", the survey was conducted among several groups according to their social position. Of the 921 boys who were interrogated by the medium of a written questionnaire, 37% were college students (80% from Catholic institutions, 10% from governmental colleges), 35% were employed in the modern sector of production (employees and industrial workers); 27% belonged to the traditional sector (rural youth and fishermen). All of them were Catholics, 68% from the Syrian rites and 32% from the Latin.

The study was aimed at discovering first, the ideological patterns existing among those groups and the persistence or not of some of the traditional social functions of religion: the second goal was to determine the functions of the Church as they are seen by the youth.

### **I. The ideological patterns and the social functions of religion.**

The study of the cultural pattern was constructed around the analysis of the opinions of the different groups on four series of propositions related to the religious reading of the social order, the religious opposition to social change, the maintenance or not of traditional norms in social life (social position of women, endogamy, freedom in the choice of marriage partner etc), and the social identification through the religious group (See Table 2: The model of the fishermen).



Table 2: The structures of the cultural models of young Catholic fishermen in Kerala.

| <i>Theoretical traditional model</i>   | <i>Actual model</i> |                  |
|--|---------------------|------------------|
|  | <i>1st model</i>    | <i>2nd model</i> |
| <b>a. Religious reading of the social order</b>  |                     |                  |
| - Social differences are willed by God and show for us his design  | X                   |                  |
| - The Church should develop resignation among the faithful with regard to social and other evils   | X                   |                  |
| - A social uprising is contrary to Catholic moral laws   | X                   |                  |
| - Most of those in poor circumstances could better their condition if they really wanted to  | X                   | X                |
| - Private property is a principle that Catholics have to defend  | X                   | X                |
| <b>b. Religious opposition to social change</b>  |                     |                  |
| - Since Divine Providence rules the world there is no need for us Christians to combine our efforts for the social betterment of the world | X                   | O                |
| - Technical knowledge goes against spiritual values  | X                   |                  |
| - Reforms must be undertaken gradually if we are to transform society  | X                   | X                |
| - Catholics have the duty of taking part in socio-economic development and of denouncing the obstacles to it (*)                           |                     | X                |
| <b>c. Maintenance of traditional norms</b>   |                     |                  |
| - Women have equal rights with men   | X                   |                  |
| - Young people should be free to choose their marriage partner   |                     | X                |
| - Marriage within the caste group is a traditional practice which does not fit in a modern society   | X                   |                  |
| - As a Christian no man owes allegiance to one political party or another (*)  | X                   |                  |

**d. Social identification through the religious group**

- Only those who believe in Christ will be saved and merit Eternal Life.
- The Catholic moral law has an answer to every problem of life X                      X
- Family planning goes against Catholic moral X

(\*) This proposition, in a traditional model, would be answered negatively.

X and O : Propositions marked with an X or O are those which are integrated in the model. X indicates a direct correlation between the propositions marked with the same sign. O indicates an inversed correlation.

Generally speaking, except among the students, we have found different patterns among the groups.

Among the *students*, we find a traditional model in 12.4% of the cases. It is to say that religion is resorted to in order to justify a social order characterised by a differentiation between the upper and the lower groups in the social hierarchy, and that the Catholic ethic is called upon to condemn any social uprising and to defend the right to private property. This vision is completed by an exclusive concept of salvation reserved for Christians alone and the acceptance of ethical standards which give a quasi-automatic solution to the problems of life; 28.9% of the students questioned express an opposite ideology, refusing to give divine intervention a direct and immediate causality of social phenomena. Outside those two groups the social vision seems to be non-structured. It means that one continues to resort to give a religious explanation to some social phenomena, while refusing such explanation to others.

Two main models prevail among the *industrial workers*. 14.5% of them take the opinion in favour of a more egalitarian society, imputing the causalities of the present situation to the social structures. 75% are inclined to adopt a reformist model seeking to extend the benefit of development to all. The opposition to social structures is limited to those of traditional society, the

castes. But in both cases, it is striking to note how the religious reading of social realities tends to disappear.

The *employees* who answered the questionnaire tend to break with a traditional ideology: 31 % are critical of the existing structures recommending commitment for their change. The others (69%) are also in favour of a change, but in a perspective of development, which does not mean a radical transformation of the social order.

The ideology of the *rural youth* is hesitant in 72% of the cases. What is disappearing comparatively fast may be defined in terms of religious fatalism *vis-a-vis* history. It means that the opposition between religious values and the progress caused by men's action is rejected. The recognition of social hierarchization and its religious justification however persists as a relatively autonomous element of culture. 28% of the rural youth have, on the contrary, a structured ideological model; 16.3% are in favour of an egalitarian society and 12% have a clear traditional ideology.

The main tendency among the *fishermen* is oriented toward an individualistic conception of development. The aspirations caused by such an ideology are those of a social upward mobility, the fruit of individual effort. In this perspective, it is not illogical to be opposed to social change, since the existing structures are not considered to be the causal factors of the situations. It means, however, that young fishermen have a social vision very much linked with the micro-dimension of society (the village in which they live).

## II. Incidence of social and cultural changes on the expectations *vis-a-vis* the Church as institution and on the religious behaviours and practices of the youth

In the analysis of the ideological patterns prevailing among the different groups who were questioned, there was a common trend, which is an erosion of the traditional model. There is a tendency in the line of rejecting a religious explanation of social mechanisms and of natural phenomena. At the same time, the two aspects being complimentary, we noted a strong development

of the consciousness that man is a social actor in history, which consequently destroys a fatalistic approach of life and even a passive dependence on Providential action.

As we also know that democratic values have been diffused in the political field (and this phenomenon is especially acute in Kerala), we may presuppose that the ways how young people see the Church as an institution, its functions in society, its organisation etc, will be affected by those social and cultural changes.

The second part of the survey was oriented in view of the verification of such hypothesis.

### 1) The functions of the Church as institution in the presence of socio-cultural changes

It was interesting to know how different groups of youth see the role that the Church as institution does fulfil and should fulfil in the process of development. We have approached the questions in three ways: (i) analysis of the opinions relating to its actual presence in society, (ii) a research of the expectations concerning the manner in which the Church should participate in development and (iii) suggestions for concrete action of the ecclesiastical institution in terms of social change.

#### (i) Opinions concerning the actual presence of the Church in society

Table 3: A. Areas of the social life where the Church could play an important role:

|  | Fisherman | Rural Youth | Workers | Employees | Students |
|--|-----------|-------------|---------|-----------|----------|
| In the religious field                     | D         | M           | M       | M         | M        |
| In the economic development                |           | M           | M       | M         |          |
| In the social uplift of the masses         | M         | D*          | D       | D         | M        |
| In the education to civic responsibilities |           | M           | M       | M         | M        |



B. Opinion on the actual position of the Church as institution in the Kerala society

|   | Fishermen<br>For<br>Against | Rural<br>Youth<br>For/Against | Workers<br>For<br>Against | Employees<br>For<br>Against | Students<br>For<br>Against |
|---|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| There is a betterment in the Church's attitude towards social injustice and the lot of the poor                           |                             | M                             | M                         | M                           |                            |
| There is a betterment in the Church's attitude toward secular affairs and its way of integrating itself in the world      |                             | M                             | M                         |                             | M                          |
| The Church is a factor of liberation in society. The Church of Kerala is creatively present in the area of culture        | D                           | M                             | M                         | M                           | M                          |
| The wealth of the Church is one of the chief difficulties that the Catholics of Kerala meet with in living their religion | M                           | M                             |                           | M                           | M                          |

D = above 70%

M = between 50 and 69 %

No sign = the percentages of acceptance and rejection of the proposition are inferior to 50 %

We found a great unanimity in approving the presence of the Church and its contribution in the cultural field. But, on the contrary, (there are very few) who consider the Church as a liberating factor in society. With the exception of the rural youth, the other groups are either opposed or strongly divided in agreeing to the fact that there is an improvement in the attitude of the

Church on the question of social injustice, the fate of the poor, even in the interest it shows in any matter which goes out of the religious sphere.

(ii) **The expectations concerning the functions of the Church in development.**

The questions submitted to the youth were related to four sectors of action for the Church, each of them implying different options concerning the ecclesiastical function in development. The first limited it to the field which is specific to it, namely the religious field. The second related it to the activity undertaken in the economic field by the so-called development projects. The third sector implied a dynamic intervention in social movements. As for the fourth, it recalled the traditional role of the institution as educator of social ethical principles.

Three groups, the rural youth the workers and the employees think that the Church should intervene in the four sectors. The fishermen and the students are more divided in what concerns the involvement of the Church in the economic field. In a general manner, there exists a large consensus in admitting the priority of the animating function for a social emancipation of the masses, a function that the youth see narrowly linked to the church's specific religious mission.

(iii) **Suggestions concerning the concrete involvement of the Church in development**

Table 4: **Concrete action that the Church has to develop to fulfil its function**

|  | Fishermen<br>For<br>Against | Rural<br>Youth<br>F/Agst | Workers<br>For<br>Against | Employees<br>For<br>Against | Students<br>For<br>Against |
|--|-----------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Teaching the sense of the human rights and the dignity of the individuals              | D                           | D                        | D                         | D                           | M                          |
| By stirring a sense of the duty of sharing the struggle for the progress of the people | M                           | M                        | D                         | M                           | M                          |

|  |   |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| By setting up charitable work for the poor families  | D | D | D | M | D |
| By setting up projects for agricultural and community development  |   | M | D | M | M |
| By animating movements that could act on public opinion to awake conscience on the problems of the country | M | D | D | M | M |
| By developing Christian trade union  | M | M | M |   | M |
| Through its college and schools  | M | M |   |   |   |
| By drawing up new syllabus for catechetical education  |   | M |   |   |   |
| By exercising influence on the elite   | M | M |   |   | M |

D = above 70%

M = between 50 and 69%

No sign = the percentages of acceptance and rejection of the proposition are inferior to 50%

We have noted a strong insistence of all the groups on the necessity of a prophetic action which would cover three aspects: a working upon public opinion in order to conscientize it to the real problems of Kerala; a reminder for all the fundamental rights of all human beings and the dignity of the person; lastly, an insistence for all Christians on the obligation of participating in the struggle for the emancipation of the masses. At the same time, the young people recommend the development of social services for the poorest.

A solid majority in all groups (except the fishermen) favour the creation of agricultural and community development projects. Students, workers and employees are for their part very divided in what concerns the participations of the Church in development

through educational institutions. They are also opposed to the creation of catholic trade unions; institutions which, on the contrary, are welcomed by the fishermen and the rural youth. Those two last groups and the students also refuse an action for the masses through the intermediary of the social elite.

## 2) The Church as an organisation

From a sociological point of view, the Church constitutes in fact a structure determined by the more or less permanent relationships between two great categories of actors, those who make up the religious institution (the hierarchy, the clergy, the religious) and the laity. Those relationships reproduced according to certain models corresponding to what we call the role of the respective actors. If ecclesiology determines the content of their functions, the modalities of the roles, that is to say, the way these functions are performed, are dependent upon the manner in which the society organises itself. If there are some changes in the social organisation, as in Kerala for instance, one can expect that they may have an influence on the way people see or would like to see the Church's organisation.

### a) Opinions and expectations concerning the role of the Bishop

Table 5: Opinions and expectations about the bishops

| <i>Opinion on religious authorities</i>                                  | Fishermen<br>For<br>Against | Rural Youth<br>For<br>Against | Workers<br>For<br>Against | Employees<br>For<br>Against | Students<br>For<br>Against |
|--|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| The real catholic accepts all the directives of the Pope and the Bishops | D                           | M                             | D                         | M                           | M                          |
| Bishops are accessible to the faithful                                   |                             | M                             | D                         | D                           | M                          |
| Bishops are in touch with the problems of the people                     | M                           | M                             | D                         | D                           | M                          |
| <i>Expectation on what a Bishop will be.</i>                             |                             |                               |                           |                             |                            |
| Administrator  | M                           | M                             | M                         | M                           | M                          |



|  |   |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| Father in the spiritual sphere   | D | D | M | M | D |
| Preacher by word and example of Christian doctrine and principles                                | D | D | D | D | D |
| Alert to problems and demands of present time, ability to renew and forge ahead                  | M | D | D | D | D |
| Ability to enter dialogue with priests and laity, leaving them certain initiatives in their work | M | D | D | D | D |
| Friend of the priests  | D | D | D | D | D |
| Animator in social question  | M | D | D | D | D |
| Animator in religious sphere   | D | D | M | D |   |

D = above 70%

M = between 50 and 69%

No sign = the percentages of acceptance and rejection of the proposition are inferior to 50%

With the exception of the fishermen, the other groups and more particularly workmen and employees, criticise the unavailability of the Bishops, their lack of awareness of actual problems and feel that the refusal to accept all the directives of the Pope and the Bishops does not take away the value of a "good" catholic. The majority of the young people who answered the questionnaire also reject the model of traditional authority characterised by a very great distance between the holder of authority and the laity. Does that mean that these opinions are the symptoms of the development in the Kerala Church of the famous crisis of authority which is said to mark the whole Church? We do not think so, for the simple reason that expectations concerning the bishop's role are great. We found a very large majority in all the groups who would like to see the Bishop as the prophet, by word and example, of the message of Jesus Christ, aware of the actual problems and capable of renewal.

## b) Opinions and expectations concerning priests

Table 6: Opinions about the priests

|  | Fishermen<br>For<br>Against | Rural Youth<br>For<br>Against | Workers<br>For<br>Against | Employees<br>For<br>Against | Students<br>For<br>Against |
|--|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| There is a change for better in the role of the priest and religious during the last few years | M                           |                               | D                         | D                           | M                          |
| There is a change for better with regard to their <i>way of living</i>                         | M                           | M                             | D                         | D                           | M                          |
| Most of the priests are on good terms with other religious groups                              | M                           | M                             |                           |                             |                            |
| Priests have been cast in a European mould   |                             | M                             | M                         | M                           | M                          |
| Most of the priests seek an easy life  | M                           | M                             | D                         | D                           | M                          |
| Priests suffer from certain complexes that hold at them a distance from the people             | M                           |                               | M                         | M                           |                            |
| Indian priests are aware of the problems of India and are doing all they can to solve them     |                             |                               | D                         | M                           | M                          |
| Priests are accessible to the parishioners   | D                           | D                             | M                         | M                           | D                          |
| Priests are equally accessible to the poor and the rich  | D                           | M                             |                           | M                           |                            |
| Priests are in touch with the problems of the people   | M                           |                               | M                         | M                           |                            |
| The clergy has a superiority complex and distrusts the laity                                   |                             | M                             | M                         | D                           |                            |

|   |   |   |   |   |   |  |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|
| Priests from abroad<br>make effort to help<br>Indian catholics to take<br>up their responsibilities                         | M |   |   | M |   |  |
| Priests from abroad<br>understand the problems<br>of the country and<br>contribute to develop-<br>ment                      | M |   |   | M |   |  |
| One of the chief diffi-<br>culties that the catholics<br>of Kerala meet with is<br>the authoritarian ways<br>of the priests | M | M | D | M | M |  |

D = above 70%

M = between 50 and 69%

No sign = the percentages of acceptance and rejection of  
the proposition are inferior to 50%

If the availability of priests is generally admitted by all the groups, the superior manner in their dealing with the laity and the authoritarian nature which characterises their relationship are also branded by each of them. The other general opinion which prevails, criticises the easy life of priests and underlines the fact that no improvement can be noticed in this field for the past few years. The groups in contact with modern economic structures, workers and employees, as well as the students are negative in what concerns the awareness of the clergy of the social situation and the same group strongly question the orientation given to the present reflection on the role of the priest.

Concerning the expectations vis-a-vis the priests, two main ideas seem to be at the basis of the building up of the profile of an ideal priest. From the point of view of his role, the content is defined in accordance with the function that one would wish to see the Church fulfil in society. The second concerns the relation between the priest and the laity, the model being constructed in opposition with the one which is actually prevalent and which was criticised because of its authoritarian aspect.

On the more precise aspect of vocation, the majority of young people reject the idea of a hierarchy of the "states of life",

the priestly and religious life being superior as compared to married life. This does not imply, however, that there should not be a differentiation of roles.

c) The laity in the Church

Table 7: **Opinions concerning the layman and his position in the Church**

|   | Fishermen<br>For/Against | Rural Youth<br>For/Against | Workers<br>For/Agst | Employees<br>For/Agst | Students<br>For/Agst |
|---|--------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| <i>Expectations concerning his duties and behaviour:</i>  |                          |                            |                     |                       |                      |
| It is essential that he goes to Mass every Sunday and keeps the precepts of the Church          | D                        | D                          | M                   | M                     | D                    |
| He tries to live according to the precepts of Our Lord  | D                        | D                          | D                   | D                     | D                    |
| He accepts all the directions of the Pope and Bishops   | D                        | M                          | D                   | M                     | M                    |
| He takes part in Catholic movements and associations  | M                        | M                          | M                   |                       | M                    |
| He shows the non-Christians that they are in error  | M                        | M                          | M                   | M                     | M                    |
| He adopts a critical attitude towards the Church  | M                        | M                          | D                   | M                     | M                    |
| He actively promotes economic, social, political, cultural and religious development of all men | D                        | D                          | D                   | D                     | D                    |



|  |   |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| He takes part in socio-economic development and denounces the obstacles to it. | D | D | D | D | D |
| One can be a really good christian without belonging to any Church             | M | M | D | M | M |
| As a christian no one owes allegiance to one political party or another        | M | M | M | M | M |
| A good catholic can be a socialist   | D | D | D | D | D |
| A catholic may collaborate with marxists in political parties                  |   |   | M | M |   |

D = above 70%

M = between 50 and 69%

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The quasi-unanimity of the youth who were questioned defined the true catholic by two characteristics: on the one hand his fidelity to the Gospel message and on the other hand his involvement in the development of all men, an involvement which implies the denunciation of the obstacles which pose it. This clear option points out that the youth do not exclude the laity from the function they attribute to the Church as institution.

Regarding the precepts of the Church, the Sunday Mass obligation is incontestable. But at the same time, we note a rather strong tendency to reject the unconditional submission to the directives of the Church's authorities including the Supreme Pontiff. Even the youth accept the fact that one can be a good Christian without belonging to any Church. This last position is inscribed in the logic that it is felt to be interwoven in the whole of the survey: the primacy given to Christian values rather than religious organisations. In the same line, the religious values do not seem to be in contradiction to ideologies like the socialist one.

Concerning the participation of the laity in the Church, the Youth feel that they do not occupy the place which should be theirs in spite of the awareness prevailing among the laity of their responsibilities. As a whole, the groups think that even the Church is moving in the opposite direction of the one suggested by Vatican II.

### 3) The Social identification through the religious groups

This aspect is important in Kerala where more than anywhere else society was structured on the basis of religious belonging for sociological reasons that cannot be explained here. One may think that the new solidarities created among the groups by the development of new social structures (let us think, for example of, the emergence of social classes in industrial and urban milieu) will affect this social function of religion. The result could be a complete new approach toward other religions or religious groups.

From the point of view of religious meanings, the fishermen and the rural youth consider non-Christians as being in error, Catholics having the mission to make them see this. The employees and workers reject this way of thinking. But in all the groups, opinions are more divided on the validity of the famous principle "Outside the Church there is no salvation"; it is important to note how the positions are hesitant on this question.

All the groups rejoice over the improvements in the relations between religious groups. As a whole we may say that there is certainly an erosion in the social identification through religious groups, but the process is more acute among the young people who are more integrated in the modern structures of society. Those groups also, more than the other, do not see any obstacle to the co-operation between christian and Marxist groups on the political level.

### 4) Catholic ethics and behaviour

Table 8: Opinions on personal and social behaviours  
and Catholic morals of Catholic Youth in Kerala

|  | Fishermen<br>For/Against | Rural Youth<br>For/Agst | Workers<br>For/Agst | Employees<br>For/Agst | Students<br>For/Agst |
|--|--------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| The Catholic moral law has an answer for every problem of life | M                        | M                       |                     |                       | M                    |

|   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Private property is a principle that Catholics have to defend   | M | M |   |   | M |
| Family Planning goes against Catholic morals  | M | M | M | M | M |
| Marriage is the consecration of a complete communion of life  | D | D | D | D | D |
| Young people should be free to choose their marriage partner  | D | D | D | D | D |
| The sexual morals of the Church is one of the chief difficulties that Catholics meet in living their religion | M | M | M | M | M |
| The Church teaching on sexual morality is the best guarantee for human fulfilment                             | M | M |   |   |   |
| A social uprising goes against Catholic morals  |   | M | D | M | M |

D = above 70%

M = between 50 and 69%

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In a traditional society, religion plays an important role in regulating individual and collective behaviour, a regulation which is essential for the maintenance of a balance in society. This fact generally engenders a relatively negative approach toward ethic; so that often the letter becomes more important than the spirit. Of course, the development of scientific knowledge has not only resulted in assuring men a certain mastery over natural elements and a new understanding of the social mechanisms but it introduces them into the practice of analysis of causalities and from thence to a type of thinking bearing on rationalisation. This process does not spare individual and collective behaviour. At the level of the individual one, the groups which are more in contact with the structure of modernity show very divided opinions (v. g. in sexual morals). This means the erosion of the traditional pattern of conduct, a phenomenon completely non-existent among the rural youth and the fishermen. In the matter of social ethics, on private property, social uprising, etc. all the groups express positions which reveal a clear distance from the official positions of the Church.

### Conclusion

What strikes when we reflect upon catholic youth's vision of society of Kerala and on the manner they relate it to religion, is first, the fact that a great number of young people are in an anomic situation from the ideological point of view. The traditional pattern which included a religious reading of the social realities is strongly eroded, if it has not completely disappeared; but as a whole a new coherent model has not yet replaced it. It means that a great number of the young have not yet a clear knowledge of the social mechanisms.

At the same time, however, most of them are very sensitive to the social injustices from which they have to suffer, and want to reduce them. In this situation, the silence of the Church is perceived as a contradiction to the Gospel message. Therefore the demand of the Church and the Church's leaders is articulated around two poles: on the one hand, a call for religious significations related to the present situation, and, on the other hand, a serious involvement in social change in terms of an option for the emancipation of the masses. Those two aspects linked together will determine the prophetic mission of the Church and of its members.

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